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"JUST BEYOND."

BY E. NESBIT.

Upon the bosom of the stream
We idly float and idly dream:
Beyond that shadowy point may be
A fairy land for you and me!
The point is rounded—nothing there
But moonlit stream and moonlit air!

And so through life—with each new spring
Come questions—What will this year bring?
The year dies, having brought no more
Than all the years that went before.
And still, oh, foolish heart and fond,
Your fairy land lies "just beyond."

FOR LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NULL AND VOID," "MADAM'S WARD," "THE HOUSE IN THE CLOSE," "WHITE HERRINS AND RED," "ONLY ONE LOVE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XII.

HUBERT LEPEL was wonderfully well versed in subtle turns of argument—in casuistry of the abstruser kind. It was long since he had looked truth full in the face or drawn a sharp boundary-line between right and wrong. Not easy to him was it to get back from the varying lights and shadows of self-deception to the radiant sunshine of truth. With bitter remorse in his heart and a strangely passionate wish to do—now at least—the right, he yet decided to bear the burden of silence until his dying day—to say no word, to do no act, that should revive in others' minds the memory of the Beechfield tragedy. He was not naturally callous, and he knew that concealment of the truth would be, as it had always been, an oppression, a weary weight upon him; but he had made up his mind that it must be so.

"Moralists tell us never to do evil that good may come," he murmured to himself, with head bowed upon his knees; "but surely in this case, when it is not—not altogether my own good that I seek, a little evil may be pardoned, a little wrong condoned! Heaven forgive me! If I have sinned, I think that I have suffered too!"

He lifted up his head at last, and saw the red light of sunset burning between the upright stems of the fir-trees, stealing with strange crimson tints amongst the yellowing bracken and umber drift of pine-needles, scarcely touching however the black shades of the foliage overhead.

With a sudden shiver Hubert rose to his feet. It seemed to him that the red light looked like blood. He turned hastily to go; he had lingered too long, had excited his own emotions too keenly. He resolved that he would never visit the lonely fir wood again. He wondered why it had stood so long. If he had been the General, he would have had the trees hewn down after the trial and done away with every memento of the place.

When he had escaped from the shadow of the wood and saw the red sun setting behind the hills, sending long level beams over the tranquil meadows and bathing field and grove and highway-road alike in ruddy golden light, he drew a long breath of relief.

And yet he felt that he was not quite the same man that had entered the wood an hour before. The foundations of his soul had been shaken; he had made a resolve; he looked at life from a new stand-point. The half-defiant determination to make the best of the future which he had announced to his sister was purged of its defiance. He would make the best of his future—yes But for this purpose he would injure no man or woman henceforward; he would work with less selfishness of aim—for the good of the world at large as well as for himself. Something seemed broken in him by that lonely hour in the wood—some hardness, some coldness of temper was swept away. To him perhaps Tennyson's words respecting Lancelot were applicable still—

"So groaned Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man."

Far enough from anything like holiness was Hubert Lepel, but a nobler life was possible to him yet.

Florence commented that evening on his pale and wearied countenance, but he smiled at her questions and would not allow that anything ailed him. He sat by her side the greater part of the evening. It was as well, he thought, to be chary of Enid's companionship. She was so sweet, so frank, that she beguiled him into imprudent frankness in return. He would not sit beside her at the piano therefore, or walk with her upon the terrace, although she looked prettier than ever, with a new wistful light in her blue eyes, a rose-flush upon her delicate cheeks.

He knew that she was disappointed when he did not come; no matter—the child must not look on him as anything but a casual acquaintance who had spoken a few rash words of compliment which it were idle to take too seriously; and he would stay with Florence.

"Enid looks well to-night," said his sister, in her soft careless tones. "She is a pretty little thing when in good health."

"Is she delicate?" Hubert asked, in some surprise.

"She has nervous attacks; she has had them at intervals ever since she was nine years old." Nine years old—the date of her father's death!—as Hubert knew. "At first we thought they were of an epileptic kind; but the doctors say that they are purely nervous, and will cease when she is older and stronger."

Hubert inquired no further. The subject was disagreeable to him, inasmuch as it connected Enid's health with her parent's fate and his sister's disastrous influence upon the family.

It was always a matter of keen regret to him that he had not been able to hinder Florence's marriage, which she had prudently made a matter of secrecy until it was too late for the General's friends to interfere.

Her calm appropriation of the position which she had secured, and, above all, the pseudo-maternal way in which she spoke of Enid, irritated Hubert almost beyond endurance.

He went back to London on the following day, promising to return to Beechfield Hall before long. For some reason or other he felt eager to get away—the air of the place seemed to excite his sensibilities unduly, he told himself.

It struck him afterwards that Enid looked very pale and downcast when she bade him good-bye. He took his leave of her hurriedly, feeling as if he did not like to look her full in the face. He was afraid that, if he looked, he would be only too sure of what he guessed—that her eyes were full of tears. He was almost glad that a speedy return to London was incumbent upon him.

He had the next day to superintend the rehearsal of his new play, which was shortly to be produced at one of the smaller theatres; and as soon as he reached his apartments he was immersed in business of every kind.

The next morning's rehearsal was followed by luncheon with friends and attendance at a matinee given for the benefit of the widow and children of an actor—a performance at which Hubert thought it well to be present, although he invariably bemoaned the loss of time.

The piece was not over until six o'clock, and he amused himself afterwards by going behind the scenes and chatting with some of his acquaintances among actors, actresses, managers, and critics. Thus it was nearly seven before he issued from the theatre, in a street off the Strand, and the day was already drawing to a close.

The lamps were lighted and a fog was gathering, through which their beams assumed a yellow and unnatural intensity. Hubert stood on the edge of the pavement, leisurely drawing on his glove and looking out for a hansom, contrasting meanwhile the glories of the Strand with those of the autumn woods in Hampshire, when his attention was arrested by the sound of a woman's voice.

"If you please, Mr. Lepel, may I speak to you?"

He turned round hastily, and, after a moment's hesitation, recognized the girl who had addressed him as a young actress whom he had lately come to know. She had been playing a very small part in the comedy which he had just seen. He vaguely remembered having heard her name—she was known on the bills as Miss Cynthia West.

Hubert raised his hat courteously.

"Good evening, Miss West. Of course you may speak to me!" he said. "Can I do anything for you?"

"Yes," answered the girl, with a quickness that sounded abrupt, but which, as could easily be seen, was born of shyness and not of incivility. "You can get me an engagement if you like, Mr. Lepel; and I wish you would."

Hubert laughed, not thinking that she was in earnest, and surveyed her critically.

"You will not have much difficulty in getting one for yourself, I should think," he said.

Miss West colored and drew back rather haughtily. It was evident that she did not like remarks of a personal bearing, although Mr. Lepel had spoken only as he would have thought himself licensed to speak to girls of her profession, who are generally open to such compliments—and indeed she was not very likely to escape compliments.

As he looked at her in the light of the gas-lamps before the theatre, Hubert Lepel became gradually aware that there stood before him one of the most beautiful women he had ever seen.

She was tall—nearly as tall as himself—but so finely proportioned that she gave the impression of less height than she really possessed. Every movement of her lithe limbs was full of grace; she was slender without being thin, and lissom as an untrained beautiful creature of the woods.

In after-days, when Hubert knew her better, he used to compare her to a young panther for grace and freedom of motion. It was a pleasure to watch her walk, although her step was longer and freer than to Enid Vane's teachers would have seemed desirable. Her features were perfectly cut; the broad forehead, the straight nose, the curved lips and slightly-puckered chin were of the type recognized as purely Greek, and the complexion and eyes accompanying these features were rich in the coloring that glows upon the canvases of Murillo and Velasquez. The skin was of a creamy brown, heightened by a carmine tint in the oval cheeks; the eyes were large, dark, and lustrous, with long black lashes and well-defined black brows. It seemed somehow to Hubert as if those eyes were familiar to him, but he could not recollect how or why. For the rest, Miss Cynthia West was a very well-dressed stylish-looking young woman, neither fast nor shabby in her mode of attire; and the things that she wore served—intentionally or not—to set off her good-looks to the best of advantage.

Hubert had seen her several times off and on the stage during the past few weeks since his return to England; she took but minor parts, but was so remarkably handsome that she had begun to attract remark.

He was a little surprised by her speech to him, and hardly thought she could be in earnest. In fact, he suspected her of a mere desire to attract his attention.

"I thought you were at the Frivolity?" he said.

"I have left the Frivolity," she answered abruptly. "This afternoon's engagement is the only one I have had for a fortnight; and I have nothing in prospect."

He gave her a keener look, and, in spite of her brave bearing and her dainty clothes he thought that he perceived a slight pinching of the delicate features, a dark shade beneath the eyes which—if he remembered rightly—had not been there two months before. Was it possible that the girl was really in want? Could he put his hand into his pocket and offer her money? He might make the attempt at any rate.

"Can I be of any use to you—in this way?" he began, inserting two fingers in his waistcoat-pocket in a sufficiently significant manner.

He was aware of his mistake the next moment. An indignant flush spread over the girl's whole face; her eyes expressed such hurt surprise that Mr. Lepel felt rather ashamed of his suggestion.

"I did not ask you for money," said Miss West; "I asked if you could get me something to do." Then she turned away with a gesture which Hubert took for one of mere petulance, though the feeling that actuated it bordered more nearly on despair. "Oh," she said, with a quick nervous irritation audible in her tone, "I thought that you would understand!"—and her beautiful dark eyes swam in tears.

They were still standing on the pavement, and at that moment two or three passers-by shouldered Hubert somewhat roughly and stared at the girl to whom he was speaking. Hubert placed himself at her side.

"Come," he said—"walk on a few paces with me, and make me understand what you want when we get to a quieter spot."

She bowed her head; it was evident that if she had spoken the tears would have fallen from her eyes. Hubert turned up the comparatively dark and quiet street in which stood the theatre that had just been visited; but for a few minutes he did not speak. At last he said, in the soothing voice which was sometimes thought to be his greatest charm—

"Now will you make me understand? I beg your pardon for having offended you by my offer of help; I meant it in all kindness. You have not an engagement just now, you say?"

"It is not easy to get one," said the girl, with a quiver in her proud young voice. "It is not a good time, you know. I had two or three offers of engagements with provincial companies this autumn, but I refused them all because I had this one at the Frivolity. They were to give me two pounds a week; and it was considered a very good engagement. Besides it was a London engagement, which I thought it better to take while I had the chance. But I have lost it now, and I don't know what to do."

"You know the first question one naturally feels inclined to put to you, Miss West, is, Why did you leave the Frivolity?"

"I can't tell you the real reason," said the girl sharply. The color in her face seemed now to be concentrated in two flaming spots in her cheeks; her mouth was set, and her brow contracted over her beautiful eyes. "I quarrelled with the manager—that was all."

"Let me see—the manager is Ferguson, is he not? I know him."

"But he is not a friend of yours?" said Cynthia, turning towards him with a look of sudden dismay.

"Certainly not! He is the most confirmed liar I ever met," Hubert answered without a smile.

CHAPTER XIII.

BUT he was a little curious in his own mind. From what he knew of Ferguson, he supposed it likely that the man had been making love to the young actress, that she had refused to listen to him, and that he had therefore dismissed her from the troupe.

Such things had happened before, he knew, during Mr. Ferguson's reign; and the Frivolity did not bear the very best character in the world.

With a girl of Cynthia West's remarkable beauty, it was pretty easy to guess the story, although the girl in her innocence thought that she was concealing it completely.

"He said that I was careless," she went on rapidly. "He changed the hour for rehearsal twice, and let everybody know but me; then I was fined, of course; and I complained, and then he said that I had better go."

"And what made you come to me?" said Hubert. "I am not a manager, you know."

"You have a great deal of influence," she said, rather more shyly than she had spoken hitherto.

"Very little indeed. Other people have much more. Why did you not try Gurney or Thompson or Macalister?"—mentioning names well known in the theatrical world.

"Oh, Mr. Lepel," said the girl, almost in a whisper, "you will think me so foolish if I tell you!"

"No, I sha'n't. Do tell me why!"

"Well"—still in a whisper—"it was because I read a story that you had written—a tale about a girl called Amy Maitland—do you remember?"

"I ought to remember," said Hubert thoughtfully, "because I know I wrote it; but an author does not not always recall his old stories very accurately, Miss West. It was a short tale for a Christmas number, I know. What was there in it that could cause you to honor me in this way, I wonder?"

"Ah, don't laugh at me, please, Mr. Lepel!"

Cynthia's voice was so sweet in its entreating tones that Hubert thought he had never heard anything more musical. She continued—

"It was all about a girl who was poor like me, and whose parents were dead, and about her adventures, you know—particularly about her not being able to get any work to do, and nearly throwing herself into the river. I have had the thought more than once lately that it would end with me in that way—the river looks so deep and silent and mysterious—doesn't it? But that's all nonsense, I suppose! However, when I read that about Amy in an old Christmas number that my landlady lent me the other night, it came into mind that I had seen you behind the scenes, and that, if you could write in that way, you might be more ready—more ready to help ——"

She stopped short, a little breathless after her long and tremulous speech.

"My poor child," said Hubert, with the tender accent that showed that he was moved, "I am afraid it does not always follow. However, let us take the most cheerful view possible of all things, even of novelists, and try to believe that they practice what they preach. It would be hard if I did not prove worthy of your confidence, Miss West. I am sure I don't know whether I shall be able to do anything for you or not, but I will see."

"Thank you, Mr. Lepel."

She said the words very low, and drew a quick breath of relief as she said them.

By the light of a gas-lamp under which they were passing at the moment Hubert saw that she had turned very pale. He halted suddenly.

"I am very thoughtless," he said, "not to recollect that you must be tired, and that I am perhaps taking you out of your way."

"No," said Cynthia simply; "I always go this way. I lodge at a boarding-house in the Euston Road."

"Then let us to business at once!" exclaimed Mr. Lepel, in a cheerful tone. "What sort of an engagement do you want, Miss West?"

She was silent for a minute or two. Then she said, with some unusual timidity of manner—

"I should very much like to have an engagement at a place where I could sing!"

"Sing!" repeated Hubert, arching his brows a little. "Can you sing? Have you a voice?"

"Yes," said Cynthia.

The audacity of the assertion took away Hubert's breath. He looked at her pityingly.

"My dear Miss West, are you aware that singing is a profession in itself, and requires a professional training, like other things?"

"Yes. But I can sing," said the girl decidedly.

"Where did you learn?"

"At school, and then of an old music-master in the boarding-house where I am living."

If he had not been afraid of wounding her feelings, Hubert would have shrugged his shoulders. They were again standing on the pavement, face to face, and he refrained from the scornful gesture.

"Well," he said, after a short pause, "if you think so, there is nothing to do but to try you. I must hear you sing, Miss West, before I can say anything about a musical engagement. Shall I come and see you to-morrow?"

"Oh, no!" said Cynthia, with such transparent horror at the suggestion that Mr. Lepel was very much amused. "We have no piano, and—and I am sure that Mrs. Wadsley would not like it."

"Then you will come to my rooms at twelve o'clock to-morrow morning?"

"Thank you. Oh, Mr. Lepel, I am so very much obliged to you!"

"I have done nothing yet to merit thanks Miss West. I shall be only glad if I can be the means of assisting a fellow-artist out of a difficulty."

He saw that the words brought a glow of gratified feeling to the girl's face.

"Here is my card; my rooms are not very far off, you see—in Russell Square.

Cynthia took the card and thanked him again so warmly that Hubert assured her that he was already overpaid. They had reached the broad torrent of life that rolls down New Oxford Street, and further conversation became almost impossible. Hubert bent his head to say—

"Shall I put you into a cab now, or may I see you home?"

"Neither, thank you," she said, shaking her head. "I am quite well used to going about alone; and it is a very little way. Good night; and I am so much obliged to you!"

"Let me see you over this crossing, at any rate," said Hubert.

She was too quick for him; she had already plunged into the tide, and he saw her the next moment halting on the central resting-place of the broad thoroughfare. He attempted to follow her, but was late and had to wait a moment or two for a couple of heavy carts. When the road was clear again, he saw that she had safely reached the other side; and, as soon as he had crossed, he dimly perceived her graceful figure some distance ahead on the sombre pavements of Bedford Square. His impulse was to overtake her, but after a few rapid strides he abandoned the intention. The girl was safe enough at that early hour; no doubt she was accustomed, as she said, to take care of herself. No need to launch into a romantic episode—to walk behind her keeping watch and ward, as if she were likely to encounter terrible danger on the way. And yet, for some reason or another, he continued to walk—slowly now—in the direction which Cynthia West had taken.

It was quite out of his own way to go all along Gower Street and eastward down the Euston Road, yet that was what he did. He saw the tall slight figure stop at an iron gate, push it open, and walk up the flagged pavement to the door of a dingy but highly respectable-looking house. The Euston Road is a neighborhood not greatly affected by people of fastidious taste; and Hubert wondered, with a shrug of his shoulders, why Miss West had found a lodging in the very midst of this ceaseless maddening roar. He passed the house with a slow step, and as he did so he read an inscription on the brass plate which adorned the gate by which Cynthia had previously entered—

"MRS. WADSLEY,
"Select Boarding-House for Ladies and Gentlemen. Moderate Terms."

"Very moderate and very select, no doubt," thought Hubert cynically. "Now is that girl making a fool of me, or is she not? All those pretty airs might so easily be put on by a clever actress. I shall find out to-morrow. She can act a little—I know that; but, if she can't sing, after what she has said, she may go to Jericho for me! And, if she does not come at all, why, then I shall know that she is an arrant little impostor, and that I am a confounded fool!"

He stopped to light a cigar under a lamp-post, and a slight smile played over his features as he struck the match.

"She's a beautiful girl," he said to himself; "if she does turn out an impostor, I shall be rather sorry. But, by Jove, I don't believe she will!"

CHAPTER XIV.

"SHALL I take off my hat before I sing?" said Miss West calmly.

She was in Hubert's sitting-room. Mr. Lepel had the drawing-room floor of a large and fine old house in Russell Square—a floor which contained two drawing-rooms opening out of each other, a bed and bath-room and a small den, generally called a smoking-room, although its master's pipes and cigars were to be found in all corners of the apartments. Hubert had partially furnished the rooms for himself, and thus done away with the bare and ungarnished appearance usually characteristic of a London lodging.

Miss West glanced around the room on her first entry with some astonishment largely commingled with admiration.

The mixture of luxury and disorder which met her eyes might have surprised even persons more conversant with the world than Cynthia West.

The golden-brown plush curtains between the rooms were half pushed back, and showed that the back-room had been turned into a library. Shelves crowded with books, tables heaped with them, a great writing-table and a secretaire showed that Mr. Lepel used the room for what might be called "professional" purposes.

But in the front drawing-room there had been attempts—and not unsuccessful attempts—at more artistic decoration.

The curtains were of exquisite brocade, some charming etchings adorned the walls, great porcelain bowls of flowers had been placed on the oddly-shaped little tables that stood about the room. A pianette had been pulled out from the room, and an Algerian shawl glistening with gold was loosely thrown over its back.

Other articles of decoration were suggestive of foreign travel. A collection of murderous-looking weapons had been placed on the wall between the two windows, some Eastern embroideries were thrown here and there over the furniture, and an inlaid mother-o'-pearl stool, an enormous narghileh, and some Japanese kakemonos gave the room quite an outlandish air.

In spite of its oddness, there was a brightness and pleasantness about the place, due to the gay tints of the Oriental stuffs and the hue and fragrance of the flowers with which pots and bowls and vases were plentifully filled.

"Yes, take off your hat and cloak, please," said Hubert, "if you do not mind the trouble."

"It is no trouble at all; I can sing much better without my outdoor things," replied the girl promptly.

She took off her little black-and-white hat and her neat little jacket, and displayed herself in a close-fitting black gown which suited her admirably, in spite of its plainness.

There was no touch of color or sign of ornament; a rim of white collar around the neck and white cuffs at her wrists gave the only relief to the gown's sombre hue. And yet, with the vivid beauty of her face above the plain dark garment, it seemed as if she could not have found a garb that was more absolutely becoming.

She stood beside the little piano for a moment with a roll of music in her hand, and looked at Hubert questioningly.

"Shall I play my own accompaniment?" she asked.

"I never thought of that; I could have judged better of your voice if we had an accompanist," said her host. "I could play for you myself if you liked."

"No: I will do it," said Cynthia decidedly. "Go to the other end of the room, will you, please, Mr. Lepel? You will hear me better there."

There was a pretty air of command about her which amused Mr. Lepel. This young woman, he reflected, as he took up the position which she had recommended, was not one who would be contented with a secondary position anywhere.

She evidently considered herself born to rule. Well, he would do her bidding; he had no objection to the rule of a pretty woman! He was not disposed to take Miss Cynthia West and her singing very seriously—as yet.

Cynthia seated herself at the piano, while Hubert flung himself into an easy-chair at the farther end of the room and crossed his arms behind his head in an attitude of attention and endurance, which showed that he was not expecting much and was prepared to bear the worst.

For the singing of an average girl of eighteen or nineteen with an ambition to appear on a public stage is apt to be trying to the sensibilities of the true music-lover; and Hubert Lepel was no mean critic of the art.

Cynthia played a few opening bars, and then began to sing a popular ballad of the day. When she had finished it, she did not look round, but went on fingering the notes, gliding gradually into another key. Then suddenly she broke out into a fine old Italian aria, which she sang with much fire and expression, availing herself of every opportunity of *fioriture* and *cadenza* afforded by the song. And thence, with only a few bars of symphony between, she launched herself upon one of Schubert's most passionate love-songs, and sang it in a style which brought the listener to his feet at its close in a musical rapture that almost defied expression.

"Why, good heavens," cried Hubert, with something not unlike a gasp, "who on earth taught you to sing like that? And your voice—do you know, Miss West, that your voice is simply magnificent?"

Cynthia kept her head down, and continued to finger the notes—mutely this time.

"I have been told that I might be able to sing at private concerts," she said demurely.

"Private concerts! You might sing at Her Majesty's or Covent Garden—with a little more training perhaps," said Hubert, trying to be cautious, but failing to hide the satisfaction which shone out of his eyes as he approached the piano. "Why have you never sung to any manager? At least you may have done so, but I never heard a word of it; and a voice like yours would be talked about, you know."

"I suppose it was old Lalli's fault," said Cynthia carelessly. "He always impressed upon me that I could not sing a bit, and that I must wait for years and years before I dare open my mouth in public."

"And who is old Lalli?" asked Hubert, gathering up her music and beginning to turn it over.

Cynthia crossed her white hands and looked down, a shadow flitting across her mobile face.

"He is dead" she said softly. "He was a very kind old friend. He lodged in the house where I am lodging now. As long as he lived I always had somebody to advise me—somebody to depend on."

Her voice faltered a little. Some moisture was visible on the long dark eyelashes as they hung over the fresh young cheeks. Hubert thought again that he had never seen a woman half so beautiful. The touch of emotion softened her loveliness—made it more human, more appealing. His tone was less light, but more simply friendly, when he addressed her again.

"Was he a musician?"

"He was a violinist in the Frivolity orchestra. He had been a singer once, I believe; at any rate, he knew a great deal about singing, and he used to give me lessons. He used to tear his hair and frown and stamp a great deal," said Cynthia, smiling tenderly; "but he was kind, and I loved him very much."

"You met with him at the boarding-house where you live, I suppose?" said Hubert carelessly.

Cynthia gave him a sudden glance. The color came into her face.

"No," she said slowly; "he took me there."

She raised her right hand and struck a few soft notes before she resumed her speech.

"You would like to know how it was perhaps?"

She made long pauses between her sentences, as if she were considering what to say and what to leave unsaid.

"I came to London about four years ago, in great trouble. I had lost all my friends—not because I had done anything wrong, but because of—other things. I wanted to get something to do in a shop or as a servant-girl—I did not care what. I tried all day, but nobody would give me work. I slept in the Park at night. Next day I began to search all over again, and again it was of no use. I had no money; I was

very hungry and tired. I sat down on a step and cried, and at last some one said to me, 'What is the matter, my poor child?' And I looked up, frightened, and saw an old man with a long gray beard and very dark eyes and a kind face stooping over me. There was Signor Guido Lalli, of the Frivolity."

"I remember him in the band quite well," said Hubert. "He had a good face."

"Had he not?" exclaimed the girl, with sudden passion. "He was the kindest, wisest, best man I ever knew! I could not help trusting him, he looked so good. He made me tell him all about myself, and then he took me with him to the boarding-ing house in Euston Road where he lived, and said that he would be responsible to the landlady for me until I got something to do. And Mrs. Wadsley was so fond of him that she took me on trust for his sake. I don't believe she ever suspected how little he really knew about me. And next day he took me to some friends of his, and between them they got me a little engagement at the theatre; and then I had a small speaking part, and so on—you know as well as I do how young actresses go from step to step—so that I was able to support myself after a time and be no longer a burden upon him."

"And would he not let you sing?"

"No; he gave me lessons every day, and made me practise a long time; but I had to promise him that I would not sing to anybody but himself unless—unless I were obliged. I used to be angry about it; but he was so good to me that I always gave in to him in the end. I fancy now that he had a purpose in it all. When I was sufficiently trained, he wanted to take me to Mapleson or some great impresario, and then get him to bring me out in opera."

"Very likely. But you say he died?"

"Yes," said the girl with a sigh, "he died—suddenly too, so that he did not even say good-bye. He was found dead one morning in his bed. Since then I have been all alone in the world; and I think Mr. Ferguson knew it, and wanted to take advantage of my position."

"So then, as I had no engagement at the theatre, I thought I would see whether my voice would do anything for me. And, as I told you last night, I made up my mind to speak to you."

Hubert had stood with his arms on the piano, looking gravely down on the girl's bent face as she told her story.

As she paused, she raised her head, and her great dark eyes looked straight into his with an expression of mute appeal which stirred his feelings strangely.

It moved him so much that he was forced to take down his arms and turn aside from the piano for a moment or two; he scarcely wanted her to see how deeply he was touched.

He soon came back to her side, however, and said—

"If I had refused to listen to you, what would you have done?"

"I don't know," she answered meditatively.

"You would have gone to some manager—some celebrated impresario?"

"And been snubbed and repulsed by one and all!" said Cynthia, with sudden passion.

She rose from the music-stool and stood facing him; he saw her bosom rise and fall, he marked the varying color in her cheeks, the light and shadow in her troubled eyes, as she poured out the impetuous words with which her heart was charged.

"I could not have borne it! I do not know how to put up with insult and contempt. I feel that I hate all the world when it treats me in that way. I never could be meek and good like other girls. I don't mean that I want to be wicked—I hope I am not wicked—but, if you had failed me, I think that I should have gone straight away to London Bridge and thrown myself into the river—for I should have had no hope left."

"My dear girl," said Hubert, rather gravely, "with that voice of yours you would have been very wrong to feel so easily discouraged."

"Oh, what would the voice matter if I could get nobody to listen to it?" cried Cynthia, with fiery scorn. "I may have a fortune in my voice, but how will the fortune benefit me if I can't have it for the next five or ten years, and am starving in the meantime? I could not have stayed more than a few days at Mrs. Wadsley's, as I had no money, and was not likely to earn any. If I was turned out, where was I to go? It is winter now, not summer, as it was when I slept in the Park four years ago and dear old Lalli found me crying on the steps. A night out of doors in this weather would not leave me much of my voice to sing with, I fancy! No; I had made up my mind, Mr. Lepel—if you would not listen to me, I would go to London Bridge. If you think me wicked, I cannot help it; it was my last resource."

With her cheeks flaming, her eyes gleaming beneath her black brows, it was plain that she was dominated by passion of no common strength, by will and pride which made it well-nigh impossible for her to lead an ordinary woman's life.

Hubert looked at her, stupefied, fascinated by her beauty; he was penetrated by an admiration that he had never felt for a woman in all his life before.

And she was a mere girl yet! He knew that she would be ten times more beautiful in a few years' time.

"You were right to come to me," he murmured, scarcely knowing what he said as he gazed into the depths of the lustrous dark eyes. "You need have no fear—you will succeed."

Cynthia drew a long breath. Her attitude changed a little; limbs and features seemed to relax, the color died slowly out of her flushed cheeks.

"You mean," she said in a lower voice, "that you do not think, after all, that I was very wrong—bold, unwomanly, I mean—to speak to you, when I did not know you, in the street last night?"

"Certainly not."

"I had no claim on you, I know," proceeded the girl, the light of excitement fading out of her face now and the perfect mouth beginning to quiver as she spoke. "It was only a fancy of mine that, as you had seemed to understand so well how dreadful it was to be alone—alone in this great terrible London—you would hold out a helping hand to a girl who only wanted work—just enough to gain her daily bread."

She sobbed a little, and put her hand over her eyes.

"Miss West," said Hubert seriously, with a desperate effort to retain a composure which was very hard to keep, "I can only assure you that I shall consider it an honor to be allowed to help in bringing you to the notice of men who will do far more for you than I can hope to do."

She withdrew her hand from her eyes and looked at him with a brilliant smile, though the tears were still wet on her eyelashes.

"You think I am worth helping?" she said. "And you will help me—you yourself?"

"I will not rest," answered Hubert. "I will work night and day and give body and soul, and I'll see you a prima donna yet!"

They both laughed, and then, obeying an impulse which stirred their hearts alike held out their hands to each other and exchanged a friendly grasp.

* * * * * *

The little village of Beechfield, like all other villages, had its dark corners where vice and misery reigned supreme. In old times Mr. and Mrs. Rumbold—good people as they were in their own fashion—had been content to leave these dark places to themselves; the decent religious poor of the parish gave them enough to do. But under the new Rector's rule a new system had begun. The Reverend Maurice Evandale thought that his duty lay amongst the lost flock of sheep as well as amongst those already in the fold. If he had been at Beechfield in the days before Sydney Vane's death, he would never have let poor Andrew Westwood and his child remain outcasts from the religious life. He would have visited them, talked to them, persuaded the child to go to school, perhaps even induced the poacher to give up his vagrant ways; at any rate, he would not have let them alone, but would have grappled fearlessly with the difficulties of their position and with that hostility which seemed to exist between Westwood and the rest of the village. Whether he would have been successful or not it were indeed hard to say, but he would have made a great effort to be so there can be no manner of doubt.

Mr. Evandale's new system produced a great sensation in the parish—not altogether a favorable sensation either; for the villagers, who had gone on so long in quiet, comfortable, self-complacent ways, did not regard with a favorable eye the changes which the Rector introduced.

All the old abuses which had slumbered peacefully in darkness for so many years were exposed relentlessly by this too-energetic young man. He swept away the village band of stringed instruments from the church gallery; he erected an organ in the chancel, and set the schoolmistress to play it; he introduced new tunes into the choir, new doctrines into the pulpit; he played havoc amongst all that was fusty and musty and venerable in the villager's eyes.

He talked about drainage, and had an inspector down to investigate the state of the village water-supply; he waged war upon the publicans, set up an institute and library for the village youths, taught the boys, played with them—thrashed them too occasionally—and made himself a terror to evil-doers and the idol of the young ladies of the place.

Naturally much was said against him, especially behind his back. To his face, people did not venture to say much.

The young Rector had such a fearless way of looking straight into people's eyes, of saying what he meant and expecting other people to do the same, that he inspired something like fear in the shiftier and less trustworthy part of the community.

On the other hand, the weak, the sick, the very young, instinctively loved and trusted him.

"He is beautiful in a sick-room," averred the elder women. Perhaps his words seemed beautiful to them because they felt that by some mysterious law of sympathy he understood their sorrows without having been a partaker in them, that he had an infinite pity for the erring and the suffering, and that he never felt himself less of a brother to his flock because so many of that flock were sinful and ignorant and degraded.

So, parson though he was, he became the friend and confidant of half the village; and strange tales were poured into his ear sometimes—tales which the tellers would formerly have laughed at the idea of relating to the Rector of the parish so long as Mr. Rumbold reigned supreme.

But to Maurice Evandale nothing seemed to come amiss; he had interest and sympathy for all.

Stern to penitent sinners he certainly was—brutal men and idle lads cowered under the lash of his rebuke; but there was not a soul in the village who did not also know that a word of repentance, an act that showed a yearning after better things, was sufficient to melt the Rector's wrath and turn him from a judge and censor into a friend.

Judging from the progress that Maurice Evandale had already made in the hearts of his people, there was a fair likelihood that if he stayed much longer he would be master of their affections and their intellects in a way which was unprecedented indeed of Beechfield.

He was not often at Beechfield Hall. The General liked his society extremely, but Mrs. Vane declared that it fatigued her.

"The man is so oppressively blunt and downright," she said, "that one never knows what to expect from him next. He is a perfect bear."

"But, my dear Flossy, he comes of a very good family, and I have heard him praised on all sides by his distinguished manners," expostulated the General. "I never knew a young man so courteous, so polished!"

"I am spoiled for young men, General," said Flossy, extending her hand very graciously to her white-haired husband.

It was not often that she showed herself so actively amiable towards him. She was usually somewhat passive, receiving his attentions with a languid indifference which would have disconcerted some men, but which did not disconcert the unsuspicious old General.

He was delighted with her little compliment, kissed her hand gallantly, and vowed that nobody should come near the house whom she disliked. So Maurice Evandale was not invited a second time to dinner.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THICK SKINNED ANIMALS.—The whale which belongs to the mammalia, no doubt holds the palm for thickness of skin. At some parts of its body, the skin is only two inches thick, but in many places its pelt is fully two feet in thickness. The skin of the whale is the substance usually known as blubber, and in a large specimen will weigh altogether more than thirty tons. The distinctions of being the thickest-skinned quadruped belongs to the Indian rhinoceros, whose hide is a knotty or granulated surface, and is so impenetrable as to resist the claws of a lion or tiger, the sword, or the balls of the old-fashioned musket. So stiff and hard is this skin, that were it not divided by creases or folds the animal imprisoned in its armor could scarcely move. It is manufactured into leather of great strength and durability, and targets and shields are made of it that are absolutely proof against darts or sword strokes. The skin of the hippopotamus runs that of the rhinoceros very closely as regards thickness. When dried it is also used for shields, which are highly prized by the natives.

Bric-a-Brac.

JAPANESE AUCTIONS.—Japanese auctions are conducted on a novel plan, but one which gives rise to none of the noise and confusion which attend such sales in America. Each bidder writes his name and bid upon a slip of paper, which he places in a box. When the bidding is over the box is opened by the auctioneer, and the goods declared the property of the highest bidder.

BEAUTY SHOWS.—Beauty shows, a Brussels correspondent writes, are not quite a novelty. He describes one held in Paris in 1555. In remembrance of the oldest competition of the kind, the prizes were golden apples. The first prize was of course awarded to the Queen of France, and the second was obtained with 1723 points by a poor girl. Most of the prizes were given to ladies from Normandy.

THE PYRAMIDS.—The old Egyptians were better builders than those of the present day. Among blocks of stones in the pyramids, there is one the weight of which is estimated at 880 tons. There are stones thirty feet in length which fit so closely together that a penknife may be run over the surface without discovering a break between them. They are not laid with mortar either. We have no machinery so perfect that it will make two surfaces thirty feet in length meet together as these stones in the pyramids meet. It is supposed that they were rubbed backward and forward upon each other until the surfaces were assimilated, making them the world's wonders in mechanical skill.

MURDER WILL OUT.—"I remember," says the famous Lord Eldon, "in one case where I was counsel, for a long time the evidence did not seem to touch the prisoner at all, and he looked about him with the most perfect unconcern, seeming to think himself quite safe. At last the surgeon was called, who stated that the murdered man had been killed by a shot, a gunshot in the head, and he produced the matted hair and stuff cut from and taken out of the wound. It was all hardened with blood. A basin of warm water was brought into court, and as the blood was gradually softened a piece of printed paper appeared, the wadding of the gun, and this proved to be half of a ballad. The other half had been found in the pocket of the prisoner when he was taken. He was hanged."

LUCK IN SHOES.—It is supposed to be unlucky to put either shoe on the wrong foot, nor must one put the left shoe on before the right, unless one wished to bring about some direful calamity. Augustus Cæsar, it is said, put on his left shoe first and before nightfall he narrowly escaped assassination. Dr. Brewer says that plucking the shoe among the Jews, smoking the pipe among the Indians, thumb licking among the Scotch, breaking the straw together among the Teutons and shaking hands among the English are all ceremonies to confirm a bargain. The Jewish custom of plucking off the shoe or sandal is frequently referred to in the Scriptures. In the story of Ruth it is recorded that a compact which Boaz made was sealed by a shoe being drawn off, one of the verses reads: "Now, this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things a man plucked off his shoe and gave it to his neighbor; and this was a testimony in Israel."

IN THE ARMY.—The cotton handkerchiefs provided for the French soldiers are now decorated with special texts and cuts for the technical and sanitary instruction of the wearers. The centre is occupied with the cross of the Legion of Honor upon a red background, and the inscription underneath it, Honneur et Patrie. Around this central point are grouped a circle of medallions, containing representations of officers of all grades from the modest sub-lieutenant to the proud commandant of a corps d'armee. The different uniforms are pictured so distinctly that the French private can tell at a glance to what grade any officer whom he sees may have attained. The special pocket handkerchief prepared for the infantry soldier has exact drawings of the arms used by him with explanations of their mechanism. The borders of the handkerchiefs are hemmed in with a framework of the national colors, and within the framework are printed a number of sanitary precepts to be observed on march and during a campaign.

A PROMINENT Turkish official in Constantinople laments the spread of Christianity among the women of Turkey on the ground that it will soon lead the Turkish ladies to dress as immodestly as Christian ladies.

THE SECRET OF BEAUTY.

BY W. W.

I could not tell—I do not know
What classic lines, what curves of grace
Must meet, and blend, and intergrow,
To make a beauteous human face.

I do not know—I could not tell,
With all the lines and curves complete,
What look within that face must dwell
To make the faultless beauty sweet.

Unknown the laws that make it sweet,
And flower-like mould it as it grows;
Enough that when that face I meet
I know it as I know the rose!

SIBYL'S CONCERN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "STRANGERS STILL," "PRINCE AND PEASANT," "THE LIGHTS OF ROCKBY," "A WOMAN'S SIN," ETC.

CHAPTER VIII.—(CONTINUED.)

IT was several days later; Mary Catherine had gone into the town for some necessary shopping, Sibyl sat playing with some light fancy-work by the open drawing-room window, and Joshua, a cigar between his lips, lolled against the window-frame outside.

"I wonder what I should do with myself if you weren't here!" the young man was saying. "The present atmosphere of this house is something funereal; I can't tell you how grateful I am to you for staying on!"

"Oh"—and Sibyl flushed uneasily, for it had occurred to her once or twice that Joshua might possibly misconstrue her conduct in this matter—"I am so glad to have been of some help to your aunt; she has been so good to me!"

Joshua laughed—an incredulous self-complacent laugh—and looked at her with mocking eyes.

"Sweet angel of gratitude! How grateful my aunt ought to be! Seriously though, I wish you would have another convenient accident, Miss Sibyl, and be compelled to stay on indefinitely. I can't bear to think of this dull old place anyway without you. Come out here upon the terrace and go for another walk over the side—do! I'll wait below and promise to catch you in time to prevent anything serious. You wouldn't object to an ankle just a little bit strained, would you?"

"I should object very much indeed. I think you are very unfeeling even to talk of such a thing!"

"Unfeeling—to you!"

Joshua moved a little nearer to her, then relapsed into silence, his eyes fixed intently upon his companion as she sat, framed as in a picture, by the clustering creepers which draped the window.

Joshua thought there could not possibly have been a better time to take a portrait of her than as she looked at that moment, with the sunlight touching the drooping head and the busy fingers as she swung slowly to and fro in her low rocking-chair.

If only the background had been a little more picturesque!

But, alas! Mary Catherine's drawing-room was as hideous and inartistic as it was possible for the crude and perverted taste of provincial upholsterers to make it!

Joshua, like his grandfather, had strong hankerings after the beautiful, and the sight of the cumbrous furniture and brilliant ill-assorted colors always acted upon him as an irritant and shocked his sense of harmony.

His brows contracted now in a disparaging frown even as he looked.

"What an abominably ugly room this is! It sets my teeth on edge whenever I look at it!"

Sibyl looked about her critically.

"It has the 'makings' of a beautiful room. There are so many nooks and corners that could be made charming nowadays; and then those windows and the lovely outlook! I can imagine it looking perfectly beautiful."

"Imagine them! I should like to hear you. Suppose you could do whatever you liked, how would you begin?"

This was a fascinating question, and Sibyl, who had a craze for house-decoration, rose to the case immediately.

She let her work fall upon her lap, turned her chair round to get a better view of the room, and assumed a most professional air of serious contemplation.

"Well, of course I should get the walls right, to begin with. Terra-cotta is the color for this room, for it doesn't get much sun, and needs warmth; and I should take some of that lovely old china that is hidden in the chiffonier and hang it about, and take down the chandelier, and have those dim stained-glass lamps instead, and the floor 'frotted,' and Eastern rugs thrown here and there, and all the heavy pieces of furniture removed, of course, and the rest covered with——"

Sibyl stopped short, with an expression of annoyance, having suddenly discovered Joshua, pencil in hand, busily employed in taking notes on a leaf of his pocket-book.

"What in the world are you doing?"

"Taking it down in writing, that's all. Well—go on! What is it to be covered with?"

"Oh, how absurd you are! Don't be stupid! I shall not say another word."

Joshua wrote on calmly.

"Not absurd at all! Memory is a very treacherous thing, and I don't want to forget a word, if I can help it."

"Are you thinking of setting up a furniture establishment?"

Sibyl spoke pertly, and felt she had only herself to thank for the look which she received in return.

"I wouldn't mind, if you would be there to show the goods! But I wasn't contemplating that at the moment; I was thinking only of refurnishing this room. You shall see it arranged exactly as you describe one of these days, Miss Sibyl."

"Don't be too sure. I am afraid Mr. Worthington won't be so willing to put away all his household gods; old people like old fashions."

"But they won't always be Mr. Worthington's gods; they will be mine some day, and then they will have to jump down from their pedestals pretty sharply."

"Oh, how can you?" cried Sibyl indignantly. "I wonder you can speak of such a thing, when he is so good and kind to you too, and loves you so much! I don't think you need be in such a hurry to get rid of him."

"Now, that's just like a woman!" said Joshua, unabashed. "Who said I was in a hurry? I'm nothing of the sort. I'm very fond of the old man—though perhaps you mayn't give me credit for it—and shall be uncommonly sorry when he departs. But, bless me, he must go some time; it's of no use pretending that he's going to live for ever! Some day, whether I wish it or not, the Homestead will be mine. I can't see the harm in saying what I shall do with it when it is. Oh, you may shrug your shoulders, but you can't give me one sensible reason to the contrary!"

"People don't generally care to speak about the death of any one they are so 'very fond of.'"

"That depends; if it is for the good of some one else they're a thousand times fonder of, perhaps they may! Now, here I have your description written out in full, and if it's a dozen years hence I shall still have it to refer to, and can make sure, in acting upon it, that everything will be just as you most like."

"Indeed you can do nothing of the sort then! I shall have seen a dozen things I like better by that time, and should probably think it perfectly hideous. I should advise you to furnish your house, when it is yours, according to your own taste, Mr. Worthington; you would find it much more satisfactory. After all, it's to be your home, and not——"

"No house will ever be a home to me, if it is not yours too!" Joshua interrupted impetuously.

The opportunity for which he had been waiting more and more eagerly as each day passed by, and his first admiration had ripened into love, had come at last.

The next moment he had thrown away what remained of his cigar, stretched out his long arms, and imprisoned the two unwilling little hands in his own, while his glowing ardent eyes were fixed upon her face.

"You cruel beautiful tormentor, why will you always pretend to misunderstand? Why are you so cold and unfeeling? You know I love you; you know I've been waiting only for an opportunity to almost ever since you came—ever since that morning I first saw you in meeting, sitting there like a little angel among all those hideous old women! And I sat and watched you, and determined I would make you look round at me too, and you did. Do you remember?"

"Mr. Worthington, let go my hands—let me get up! You don't know what you're saying! I don't want to hear anything more; let me go!"

"No, no"—Joshua held her down firmly—"not so fast; you are such a difficult person to catch, I can't afford to let my opportunities slip away. Now, don't look at the door as if you were afraid I was going to murder you! See—I won't even touch you. I won't frighten you, poor little trembling thing! Come now, you have gone through this sort of thing often enough before—how many times, I wonder?—don't look so startled! You sweet beautiful darling! Give me your little hand back again of your own free will, and tell me you love me too, and will be my wife!"

"Oh, no, indeed!"

Sibyl sprang swiftly to her feet, and retreated behind her chair.

"Mr. Worthington, you mustn't speak like that to me, you mustn't indeed—I can't listen! Please let me go upstairs now—don't let us say anything more about it!"

"Indeed we will then!"

Joshua followed her, a flush of anger passing across his face.

"Come, Sibyl, you are not going to treat me badly—you aren't going to throw me over at the last after all this time—after letting me expect such a different reception—I'll never believe it of you! You're not the girl to play fast and loose with a fellow like that!"

Sibyl gasped with consternation and astonishment.

"Oh, how can you say such a thing? I'm sure I never encouraged you; I'm sure I never led you to expect anything, or pretended to care for you. You said yourself I was cold and unfeeling. You've surely no right to accuse me as you have done!"

"Do you mean to say that you didn't know I was in love with you?"

The hot blood rushed into Sibyl's face and dyed it crimson.

"I—I——"

"Yes, of course you did—I know you did! Then, if you never meant to encourage me, what did you intend by staying on and on for days after you were better, and putting off your return time after time? Was that no encouragement? What did you mean by that?"

"I never thought of you; I stayed on to please your aunt, because she was in trouble and wanted me; and she had been so kind and good that I couldn't bear to refuse her."

Joshua laughed harshly.

"And you expect me to believe that! I'd have got up a better excuse than that, if I'd been you! Never mind, it does as well as any other. I can see through the whole thing plainly enough now. It was a little livelier here than at William Pollard's—wasn't it? It's rather amusing having a fellow hanging about and making a fool of himself generally on your behalf! Sort of 'pastime ere you went to town'—eh? I suppose you are always glad to have a fresh name to add to your list of victims?"

"How dare you speak to me like that?" cried Sibyl, in a tempest of indignation. This sort of love, which could change so easily from entreaty to abuse, which knew neither reverence in its approach nor dignity in its withdrawal, had no power to touch her heart or inspire her with the slightest sympathy for its disappointment, and her voice vibrated with anger as she spoke. "How dare you speak to me like that? You are judging other people by yourself! If you think I am capable of such conduct, it is because you are capable of such yourself! I would never marry you Mr. Worthington, if there were not another man in the world! I could never trust a man who would speak to a girl as you have spoken to me!"

"Sibyl, I beg your pardon—I didn't know what I was saying—I was distracted! Forgive me, darling! I'll do anything in the world for you if you'll only promise to try and love me. I am well off—I've a good position to offer you—I would never ask you to live here. You should have your house in town, and everything you fancied—I would do whatever you wanted, Sibyl!"

"Oh, no, no—it's of no use thinking of it; I could never marry you, Mr. Worthington! I'm very, very sorry, but please don't be angry—let us be friends, if we cannot——"

"Oh," Joshua cried derisively, "the old story! 'Friends'—that's the orthodox thing to say, isn't it?—'I won't marry you, but I shall always be your most devoted friend'! No, thank you, Miss Aythen; it's not an offer I particularly care for; I can never be a mere friend to you. If it comes to that, I never wish to see you face again as long as I live, if that is really all the answer you've got for me!"

"Well, very likely you'll get your desire! I'm going home in a day or two now, and we shall neither of us be in a great hurry to meet again!"

Sibyl spoke hastily, and then drew herself up, with a pang of compunction.

"Now we are both getting angry again, and saying things that we shall be sorry for afterwards—at least, I shall, for I can never forget how kind you were to me when I was ill."

Joshua burst into a harsh discordant laugh.

"Grace after meat! That's my little sop to let me down easily, is it? Many thanks, I'm uncommonly obliged!"

Sibyl stooped down and picked up her work, folded it up on the little table by her side, and then turned with calm composure towards the door.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Worthington! Some day, when you really find out what it is to love any one, you will understand how little you can have cared for me, to treat me as you have done to-day."

Joshua stood in silence, watching the graceful figure in its silken robe, the defiant carriage of the little golden head, as Sibyl crossed the room and disappeared through the opposite doorway, and he ground his teeth in mingled rage and disappointment.

There was little of the bitterness of rejected love in his heart at that moment; Sibyl's grace and beauty had intoxicated his senses, her indifference had increased his ardor, until he had forgotten everything else—every tie of truth and honor, every promise to another; he had revelled, in anticipation, in all the pride and triumph which the future was to bring him, and the blow fell more sharply upon his vanity than upon his affection.

If he had found Sibyl to be any less winsome, less lovely, and therefore less worthy to be regretted, it would have been his truest comfort; but, in spite of himself, he could only admire the quiet coolness of her manner towards him during the short time that they remained under the same roof, and in the one short interview which took place before they parted.

Joshua had reflected that it would not be a desirable thing to pose in society as a rejected suitor, and, in as roundabout a way as possible, he intimated as much when he uttered his farewell.

"You mean that you don't want me to tell any one?" said Sibyl, looking him full in the face. "Don't be afraid; I won't interfere with your chances elsewhere!"

Joshua bit his lip furiously as he turned aside, and yet the implication was true enough—it was Annie Riley of whom he was thinking.

As usual in any moment of trouble or rebuff, his thoughts had gone back to her; and he found rest and comfort in the remembrance that, whatever happened, he was at least sure of Annie's love and sympathy; for Fate, no matter what rubs and falls she had kept in store for him, had at least been kind in granting him that security.

He felt some twinges of conscience as he reflected.

Poor Annie—he was unfeignedly glad that she would never know of his mad infatuation; he would be more considerate of her feelings in future, the tacit engagement should be made public.

Sibyl would be astonished to hear of the speedy manner in which he had consoled himself for her rejection, and perhaps it would ruffle her self-composure a little to hear from her friends that it was an old attachment which had culminated in this long-expected engagement.

Joshua thought deeply over his plan of action, and the two conflicting waves of thought—the bitter longing for revenge, and the new sympathy born of fellow-feeling—both seemed to urge him towards the same step—a public engagement to Annie Riley.

Sibyl kept her promise of silence religiously, and Caroline was too full of anxiety to make the most of the few days which yet remained of her friend's visit to be unpleasantly curious about anything which had happened during her stay at the Homestead; but, when Annie came, by special invitation, to say good-bye, it was not so easy for Sibyl to keep her own counsel.

For the first part of the afternoon Annie was very quiet, and Sibyl felt chilled by the conviction that the coming farewell was not such a matter of mutual regret as she had expected; but when Annie rose to go, she turned, as with a sudden impulse of confidence, and laid her hand upon Sibyl's arm.

"Will you walk part of the way home with me? I mayn't see you again for a long time."

Sibyl's face brightened with pleasure; she ran upstairs for her hat and gloves, and the two girls walked slowly down the quiet deserted street, side by side.

"I wish," began Sibyl, with half-nervous hesitation—"I wish you would let me ask you to come up and stay with me in London for a while, Annie. I have very few girl friends, and I should so much like to see more of you."

"You are very kind."

The words came tardily: Annie was not skilled in the art of gracefully disguising her thoughts, and found it difficult to reply for she could not echo Sibyl's friendly wish; but her answer when it did come was, like all her utterances, strictly truthful.

"It was such a pity that you had that accident, and were laid up for so long; we should have been able to see much more of you if it hadn't been for that. You have spent nearly half the time that you have been here at the homestead."

"Yes, how extraordinary it seems, doesn't it? How little we thought it would come to that when I was imitating poor Mary Catherine that afternoon! I'm awfully penitent whenever I think of it now, for I have grown so fond of her."

"But you couldn't manage to grow fond of Joshua too? You couldn't care for him?"

Annie was looking straight into Sibyl's face as she spoke, and not a quiver or shade of expression escaped her steady gaze—the quick start of amazement, the vivid rush of color, the mingled embarrassment and surprise.

"Why, how—how—who told you?"

Annie turned aside her head, with a short laugh.

"Oh, I didn't need to be be told—I knew quite well that he was going to propose to you! You haven't accepted him, then—you don't care for him?"

"Of course not—how could I? But, Annie, I promised not to say anything about it, and I haven't even told Carrie. Please don't mention it again."

"I'm not very likely to do that," said Annie very quietly; "you need not be afraid."

Then, with a sudden touch of bitterness—

"But it is a pity—you are very beautiful, you will find many men ready to give you their love—it seems a pity that you should have stolen Joshua's too!"

"Annie," returned Sibyl earnestly, "he never did love me. He thought he did, but it was a mistake. When I couldn't do just as he wanted, he wasn't grieved a bit, he was only angry and irritated. He was very rude, very ungentlemanly—he spoke as no man could possibly have done to a girl he really loved—it was only a passing fancy."

Annie did not answer; but a few moments later, as they reached the end of the road, she came to a standstill, and held out her hand in farewell.

"Oh, mayn't I come a little farther with you?" pleaded Sibyl.

"No; you must go back now; this is such a lonely lane, it wouldn't do for you to have to return by yourself. Good-bye, Sibyl! I hope you'll be very happy whoever you love!"

Annie bent down, kissed the wistful face that was raised to hers, and then immediately turned aside, as if anxious to avoid any further discussion of the subject. She had no personal grudge against this unconscious rival, but it was more than even her fortitude could bear to walk with her down that quiet shady lane—the lane where Joshua had spoken those few earnest words of love and gratitude which had made it a sacred spot in her eyes for ever.

Sibyl retraced her steps with a very heavy heart, for Annie's voice and manner—and, more than anything, that one word "stolen"—had given her, for the first time, a suspicion of the truth.

If she was really correct in her fears, what a disastrous occasion this visit to Brierley had been, and how many compli-

cations seemed likely to result from it!

She was to be accompanied to London on the following day by her host and hostess who were to join Mr. and Mrs. Lee at Dover, for they were all going off together on a month's Continental tour. On their return, when they would have a day or two to spend in town, George had promised to make a point of seeing his cousin, and given a full explanation of the deception that had been practised upon him. After that—well, after that it was impossible to say what would happen; and Sibyl's heart alternately beat fast with expectation or sank with despondency as she contemplated what Ralph Gaskell's future conduct might be.

CHAPTER IX.

WHILE the two young couples were enjoying to the full the delights of their Continental trip, and Sibyl Aythea, throwing herself eagerly into the whirl of London galeties, was counting the days until they should have returned, Ralph Gaskell was finding his work—to which, for the first time in his life, he was giving but a divided attention—intolerably dull and irksome.

He was not a man who was accustomed to doing anything by halves; and, he never having frittered away his affections in idle flirtations, this new passion for the sweet Quaker maiden had taken firm and full possession of his heart and mind.

The fair face rose between him and his dusty law-books; the beautiful gray eyes haunted him persistently; the longing to see her again, to know more of her, to hear her speak, to feel her hand in his, became well nigh unbearable.

To another man this unaccountable attachment to one of whom he knew so absurdly little would have appeared a thing to be treated with caution and suspicion, as likely to prove but the passing admiration so often paid to a pretty face; but Gaskell had seen scores of pretty faces and passed by unscathed.

It was not Sibyl's beauty that was the predominant attention: it was rather that mysterious inexplicable sympathy which draws on a heart to another, and chooses it out of all the rest in the world as its own mate and companion.

He could not bring himself to believe that his first impulse had been a wrong one; he had not regretted the sending of that extraordinary letter; and, when the timidly worded note came in reply, he could only rejoice in the conviction that the feeling had not been wholly one-sided—the attraction had been too strong not to be mutual.

He had read and re-read his answer a score of times, reading much between the lines of the writer's frame of mind—smiling, with a half-tender, half-reproachful smile, at the broken sentences which persistently contradicted one another, and yet left the writer's inclination so innocently transparent.

He was not to think about her any more—but there was no reason why he should not.

She feared that a closer acquaintance would not heighten his regard, yet she too would be glad of an opportunity of meeting him again.

He was not on any account to go down to see her, but very soon "the obstacle" would be removed.

Then there was that quaint curious signature in the pretty girlish handwriting—"Thine truly, Mary Catherine Worthington."

It was after gazing fixedly at it for the twentieth time, and conjuring up the host of distracting mental pictures which always accompanied such a contemplation, that Ralph Gaskell one evening, a week or so after Sibyl had returned to town, made up his mind to a bold and sudden stroke.

"Very soon—very soon, she says, this obstacle will be removed! Why, it's three weeks and more now since I wrote! Why shouldn't I go down and see her myself, instead of hanging about here, waiting for a letter which may never come? Perhaps she may not like to write—it would be awkward and embarrassing for her—ah, I never thought of that! It is plainly my place to take the first step. I'll run down to-morrow."

He sprang up and took down the book containing his list of engagements from its corner of the bookcase.

No, there was no business waiting which could not easily be postponed.

He consulted the railway time-table and decided on his train, dashed off a few necessary letters, went quietly to bed, and the next day, at about one o'clock, was found standing outside the gate of his cousin's house at Brierley.

The place had a strange deserted look, and, while he was still struggling with the unyielding bolt of the gate, the postman approached on his rounds, and paused to give the visitor very unwelcome intelligence.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee were abroad, and the house was shut up for a month; the letters were all left with one of the older servants, who was living at the gardener's cottage, a little lower down the road.

"Then perhaps I had better refer to her," said Gaskell slowly. "Or stay—perhaps you can tell me where to find a family called Worthington, living somewhere about here. There is an old gentleman, I believe—a Quaker."

"Joshua!" interposed the postman. "Oh, yes; every one about here knows very well who he is! Do you know the Chester Road, sir? If you go as far up there as you can, you'll find the Homestead gates right ahead of you. The Worthingtons have lived there, father and son, pretty well as long as any one about these parts can remember."

"Thank you; I suppose it's all right—there are not many families of that name, I presume? Is there a daughter—a Miss Mary Catherine—in this particular one, do you know?"

"Ay, there is indeed!"

The man spoke with much significance, and Gaskell turned aside, feeling ridiculously self-conscious, for he was convinced that the postman divined all about his errand.

The trio at the Homestead were in the middle of their oppressively silent midday meal when the stranger's ring sounded at the door.

Old Joshua had hardly exchanged a word with his daughter since the evening when he had come home and displayed so much agitation and excitement.

Mary Catherine's entreaties to know in what she had offended had been answered by such a storm of bitter reproaches that she had gradually relapsed into her old position of silent endurance, and made no further efforts towards reconciliation.

She presided as usual at the head of the table, but without taking the slightest part in the desultory conversation that went on between the two gentlemen, or doing more than make a pretence of eating.

The thin worn face was sharper and more haggard than ever; the old bitter repinings over a life sacrificed and unappreciated had once more sprung into life, and Mary Catherine did not know how she could have endured those weeks of dumb misery if it had not been for the comfort which came every second or third morning, under cover of those dainty envelopes bearing the London postmark.

The kindly grateful words which flowed so naturally from Sibyl's pen were just now the only ray of brightness in Mary Catherine's unhappy life.

"A gentleman wishes to see thee, Mary Catherine, in the library."

The old servant advanced and laid a card down by her mistress's side.

Mary Catherine glanced at it carelessly, and, the meal having come to an end, rose to leave the room; but, before she had reached the door, her father, taking possession of the little piece of pasteboard, brought down his fist upon the table with a force that made the glasses ring again, and called after her in a tone of thunder:

'Come back—come back, I tell thee! Nay, thou shalt not go so easily—sit down in thy seat. He shall come in here—I'll have no more meetings—no more sly meetings—no more underhand dealings. He shall come in here and see thee in thy father's presence. Since he has dared to come inside my house, he shall reckon with me to-day—he shall see thee in this room and in no other, and he shall see thy father too!"

Mary Catherine recrossed the room, and seated herself in her chair without a single word or exclamation of astonishment.

Her face was positively distorted for the moment by the violence of her feelings—the outraged pride and bitter indignation at such a humiliation in the presence of the very servants of the household.

Father and daughter were terribly alike at that moment, and the sight of the two white inflexible faces, with Joshua's, only a shade less perturbed, in the background, struck the stranger with dismay as he entered the room.

He gave one quick involuntary glance round the room, expecting to see in some out-of-the-way corner the shrinking figure of his poor little love—the edelweiss of these icy regions; but there was not the slightest sign of her presence, and as yet neither greeting nor return of his own salutation had been vouchsafed by any of the silent trio.

Gaskell however was thoroughly aware of the earnest scrutiny with which he was regarded as he stood on the threshold—a striking figure enough, with his firm broad shoulders, his dark face, thin and eager, but with that look of power which redeemed it from all possibility of plainness.

So much older than his thirty years did he look that old Joshua Worthington saw nothing in his appearance to lessen the suspicion with which he regarded him—this was no pink-and-white boy, but an experienced man of the world.

"Thou wishest to see my daughter," said the old man at last, not rising from his chair, but pointing with one long out stretched finger in the direction of the sofa. "Be seated; thou shalt see her this time in her father's presence!"

"She is at home, then!" exclaimed Ralph very quickly. "You will allow me to see her!"

"It is of little avail to ask that; she is here to answer for herself. Thou hast not distressed thyself for my consent before—it is needless to attempt to deceive me now."

Gaskell looked in consternation in the direction of the old man's glance.

Hitherto he hardly so much as noticed the presence of this middle-aged and repellent-looking woman, with the set stern features and immovable expression.

Surely it was impossible that the old gentleman could suspect him of a clandestine attachment to this elderly spinster!

The idea was almost too much for his very keen sense of humor, and Ralph with some difficulty repressed a smile as he advanced a step or two nearer.

"I am afraid there is a little mistake. It was not this lady, but a Miss Catherine Worthington whom I wished to see.

"I am Mary Catherine Worthington."

"I beg a thousand pardons!"

This was really becoming serious.

"Then I must have been directed to the wrong house; there is no doubt another lady of the same name—perhaps you will be able to direct me——"

He paused, for, with a furious gesture of anger, old Joshua pushed back his chair and rose to confront Ralph Gaskell.

"Enough of thy deceit and hypocrisy! Thou thinkest to fool the old man to his face, dost thou—as thou hast led his own child to do before thee? Thou wilt feign unconsciousness, and carry on thine underhand dealings before my very eyes; and thou—thou"—turning, almost incoherent with indignation, towards his daughter—"thou will play into his hands—thou wilt deceive and set the hypocrite—thou wilt——"

"Stop—stop!"

The clear incisive tones rang through the room.

Gaskell crossed to Mary Catherine's side and stood by her, his tall figure drawn to its full height, his face quite as stern and determined as the old man's.

"Stop—not another word until you have heard what I have to say! You are entirely deceived. I have never either seen or spoken to this lady in my life until this moment. I have had no dealings with her, or she with me. I am as complete a stranger to her as I am to yourself!"

"Then by thine own words I will convict thee. Thou, who art so clever at deception, does not reckon on the miscarriages of fortune by which even deeper schemes than thine have fallen to the ground are now. What wouldst thou say if I were to tell thee that I have a letter of thine addressed to this lady—of whose existence thou wast so unconscious—in my pocket at this moment?"

"Would you be kind enough to allow me to look at it?"

The old man thrust his trembling hand into his pocket, and drew forth a letter.

"Ay, there it is; signed in thine own name—thou seest—addressed to her under cover of another! Ah, it is of small use striving against what is in the blood! She has deceived me before, and——"

"Father"—Mary Catherine turned upon him suddenly, a thrill of anger in her voice—"take care what thou sayest—take care of what thou accusest me this time; thou mayst try me once too often——"

"Will you allow me a moment?" interrupted Ralph, in his most earnest manner. "I'm afraid there has been some unfortunate mistake. That is my letter, but it was never intended for your daughter. The lady to whom it was addressed, and who has apparently the same name, was quite a girl, not much over twenty, whom I met down here some few weeks ago—a member of your Society."

"There is no other member of that name in our Meeting."

"It is most extraordinary! Surely you are mistaken! A beautiful fair-haired girl, with gray eyes and very long dark eyelashes. Ah!"—as a sudden gleam of recognition and surprise flashed across the three faces—"you know her—you can tell me where to find her!"

"Where was it, didst thou say, that thou first met this lady?"

"At my cousin's house—George Lee. He is away from home, or I should not have made this unfortunate mistake to-day. I was spending an evening with him when this Miss Worthington happened to call, dressed as a Friend. George had just gone to his room, as he was very unwell, so I saw her in his place. We had rather a long conversation. I was anxious to pursue the acquaintance, and wrote, asking permission to call upon her, and received a letter in reply asking me to delay doing so for the present, as there was some—er—some obstacle to our meeting, which would however shortly be removed."

"Ah!" Old Joshua caught his breath hurriedly. "And thy letter, the one in my possession, was in response to that?"

"It was. But may I ask how it happened to come into your possession in such a very unfortunate manner?"

"It was simple enough. George Lee's servant, to whom all his letters are sent, ran after me with this as I was passing one afternoon. It had just arrived, and was addressed to my daughter. It was marked 'private,' and written in a strange hand, and——"

"And thou opened it!" Mary Catherine interrupted quietly.

The old man straightened himself and threw back his white head.

"Most certainly—as I should ever do any epistle which was sent in such an underhand way to one of my household! Sift thou hadst a letter in response, thou sayst—in what name was that written?"

"In the same name, of course—Mary Catherine Worthington! I have it with me now—perhaps the handwriting may——"

"Is it anything like this?"

It was young Joshua who spoke, joining in the conversation for the first time, as he lifted an empty envelope from a small table near at hand, and held it towards the stranger.

Ralph Gaskell uttered a glad exclamation of recognition.

"Ah, that's it! See, here is the signature—the same as the address there, of course! I must beg you to excuse the misunderstanding; you will see now how utterly unfounded was your accusation. George Lee's unfortunate absence has——"

He paused, for the father and daughter were gazing straight into each other's faces, oblivious of everything else beside—the one with cold defiant pride and indignation, the other with shame and penitence.

"I have misjudged thee, Mary Catherine," said the old man tremulously; "thou hast a right to thine anger; but, as I have blamed thee in public, so will I apologize to thee in public. I ask thy forgiveness, my daughter—I ask thy pardon for my unworthy suspicions and doubts."

"Nay," replied Mary Catherine, with a bitter smile, taking no notice of the outstretched hand, "there is little value in a forgiveness that ever remembers and suspects. Mine might be like thine, perchance—not worth the granting!"

A painful silence followed, during which Gaskell devoutly wished himself out of the way, and racked his brain for the readiest pretext for beating a retreat.

"I am sorry to trouble you, but may I ask you to be kind enough to tell me where I may find this other Miss Worthington?"

The old man's face darkened with burning anger.

"There is no other woman of that name, I tell thee; thou hast been deceived by a heartless unprincipled creature, who has scrupled not to make use of a friend's name for her own amusement. Ay, and we have been deceived as well as thou; we were all fooled by her pretty face and pleasant ways! She has returned to her friends, and is doubtless even now congratulating herself on thine infatuation, and the clever way in which she has befooled thee!"

"But—but do you mean to say that she is not a Brierley lady—that the name which she has given me is not her own?" cried Ralph hotly. "Who is she, then—where is she to be found? I should like to have a word or two about this! What is her real name?"

Mary Catherine rose from her seat.

"Nay," she said, with quiet resolution, "I will not tell thee. As it is my name which she has borrowed, it is to me she will be answerable. I do not choose to let the matter go any farther; I can give thee no information."

"Then I need not intrude on you any longer," rejoined Ralph, taking up his hat and preparing to leave the room in a glow of mingled anger and chagrin.

Neither father nor daughter made the slightest attempt to hinder him or vouchsafe more than a silent farewell; but young Joshua followed him into the hall, and strolled down the garden walk, with his usual easy familiarity, which Gaskell was not inclined to discourage.

His curiosity was, naturally enough, stronger than ever, however much his affection might be chilled by the discovery of the deception which had been practised upon him; and Joshua seemed the only source through which, in the meantime, any information could be gleaned.

"I'm afraid," said Ralph, "I've given you all a very unpleasant quarter of an hour."

Joshua shrugged his shoulders carelessly.

"Oh, I don't know; you brought things to a crisis at any rate, and matters could not have gone on very much longer as they were! It's been a bad business for my grandfather—nearly settled him! At some remote period, when my aunt was a girl, he found her out in a secret love-affair, and since then he has lived in chronic dread of her playing the fool some fine day—never appears to realize that she's an old woman now, and not likely to have much temptation. However, this is uncommonly hard lines on her too; this—this girl," said Joshua vaguely, by no means anxious to give his rival any information which would lead to Sibyl's discovery, "has behaved very badly. She got up a bit of an accident one day when she was here, and had to remain to be nursed, of course—stayed on, long after she was better, for that matter, and pretended the greatest affection for my aunt—awfully sympathetic too when the governor took this turn and wouldn't have anything to say to her. It was cleverly done, the whole thing."

"Then you mean to say," said Gaskell, in clear deliberate tones, "that it was a deliberately planned deception? Is that it? This young lady, for some reason or other, plotted to get your aunt into disfavor with her father. Have you any idea, now, what reason she could have had for such a proceeding? There is generally a strong motive in the background in affairs of this sort."

Joshua hesitated.

"Oh, she had her own ideas! My grandfather is a very rich man, and his daughter will, of course, come in for a large share of his property at his death, unless he has any grievance against her. I am, at present, a secondary heir!"

"I see."

Joshua's insinuation was too obvious to be misconstrued.

The charming adventuress had not been content to aspire to a "secondary heir," so she had sought to bring disgrace upon the poor old spinster, and thus put the young man in her place; but apparently she had been as unsuccessful in gaining his affection as his advancement.

Gaskell gazed searchingly into his companion's face, and it did not please him.

The handsome outline of the features was spoiled by the shifty irresolute mouth and narrow forehead.

It was the most disenchanting discovery of all to find that it was for the sake of such a rival as this that his fair unknown had so plotted and deceived!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

An excellent way to clean old brass is to use ordinary household ammonia, undiluted, and rub with a brush. This will leave the metal clear and bright. It should then be rinsed in clear water and wiped dry.

SAD DAYS.

BY C. S. M.

Look you, my sweet! we must accept sad days;
Love is like morning dew
That glitters with a thousand fervid rays
Of dazzling hue.

No brighter thing beneath the eternal sky
Than this small water drop; but come not nigh!
Gaze not too near!
It shines from far a diamond—close by
'Tis but a tear!

A Simple Maiden.

BY FRANCES SELOUS.

CHAPTER I.

WHY, papa, you look as thoroughly wet through as if you had been dragged through the river. Do make haste and get your clothes changed."

"All in good time, my dear. You ought to know of old that I'm impervious to the weather, and that not all the rain in Derbyshire ever caused me as much as a single sneeze. By-the-way, when the butcher's man calls, you had better order a leg of lamb for to-morrow, and if you have time, you might drive into Warley this evening and see whether you can't forage out a little asparagus and a peck or so of marrowfats."

"All which means that you have invited someone to dinner."

"Precisely so. A brother piscator whom I encountered in the Dale, and with whom I had the pleasure of getting soaked through in company. But I will tell you more about him when I've changed my toggery."

The speakers were the Rev. Dyke Fermor, rector of Whiteapple, in the county of Derby, and his eldest daughter Margery.

The rector was a well-built, bluff-looking man, in age somewhere between fifty and sixty.

He had strongly-marked features, dark piercing eyes under bushy pent-house brows, a somewhat aggressive expression of countenance, and altogether more the air of a gentleman farmer than that of a clergyman.

Margery Fermor had turned the corner of her twenty-first birthday a month before, but did not look her age by a couple of years.

The slightness of her figure caused her to seem taller than she really was, as well as serving to augment the youthfulness of her appearance.

She had large, dark, pathetic-looking eyes, with a sort of wistful, far-away expression in them, which many people—chiefly of the opposite sex—found singularly attractive.

Her features were delicate and finely cut; her hair was a mass of short black glossy curls, arranged in a way which, while to all appearance the acme of carelessness, in reality owed not a little to the touch of art.

Her complexion was designated by her sister Bessie as being of the 'strawberry-and-cream' kind—a description which, crude though it be, in lack of a more elaborate one, may be allowed to pass.

The visits of strangers to Whiteapple Rectory were so few and far between that Margery Fermor might well be excused for feeling some curiosity as to the one whom her father had invited to dine there on the morrow.

"Now, papa, you must tell me all about your rara avis before you sit down to your newspaper," she said as the rector re-entered the room, looking rosy and comfortable, "because if you once get buried in the *Times*, there will be no coaxing a word out of you till the last advertisement has been read and digested."

The rector gave utterance to a mellow, unctuous laugh, such as one would hardly have expected from so hard-featured a man.

"I am not aware that I as much as hinted at having lighted on a rara avis," he said. "There's his card, however, and when I tell you that he is staying at the Angler's Rest at Warley, bent, as he himself expressed it, on idling away a few weeks in sketching and fishing, your knowledge of him is about on a par with my own."

Margery took the card and read: "Mr. James Gascoigne."

"No information to be got from that," remarked the rector. "It may be the name of a great swell—there are Gascoignes in the Peerage, I believe—or it may be that of a mere bagman out for a holiday."

"But what is he like, papa? Is he a gentleman? Is he young? Is he good-looking?"

"To two at least of your queries I can answer 'Yes' with a clear conscience. He is certainly a gentleman: on that point I cannot be mistaken. In age I should take him to be about thirty; and as for his looks, you will be able to decide that point for yourself, but certainly I should call him a fairly handsome man."

"Whatever Mr. Gascoigne may turn out to be, you are a darling old ogre for asking him to dinner. We have not had a stranger to dine at the rectory since you brought Mr. Medway, now nearly half a year ago."

"Ah, my poor girl, this is indeed a heaven-forgotten hole in which you are condemned to pass your days!" said the rector with a sigh, which was but the echo of a very ancient grievance.

"There is one little peculiarity about Mr. Gascoigne," he went on presently, "which it may be as well you should be made acquainted with beforehand. It is a point as to which I can readily imagine him to be peculiarly susceptible, so much so that even a too conscious look, or a thoughtless smile, on the part of others, might be enough to cause him pain or much annoyance.

"Nature, when she sent Mr. Gascoigne into the world, was evidently in one of her sportive moods. She conferred upon him the torso of an athlete with the lower extremities of a man whose growth has been prematurely arrested. When Mr. Gascoigne is seated, he appears as other men are, except that he looks a finer specimen of his kind than ordinary; when Mr. Gascoigne is standing upright, the crown of his head is about on a level with my shoulder."

"What a great pity! Then he is more or less deformed."

"Not a bit of it. All his limbs appear to be as straight and well formed as—well, let us say as mine. There is no deformity, but simply an incongruity, one half his body being so utterly disproportionate to the other half. And now I may, perhaps, be allowed to read my *Times* in peace."

The Rev. Dyke Fermor might have said, in his own case, that Nature had never intended him for a country parson, nor, indeed, for a churchman of any kind, and certainly inclination had nothing to do with the fact of his being one.

He had all the instincts of a soldier, and his home ought to have been on 'the tented field' rather than within the four walls of a rectory.

He got through his duties perfunctorily; his heart had never been in them from the first, and with each succeeding year they became more distasteful to him.

He hated sermon-writing, and he 'conveyed' as much from the old divines as his conscience would allow of his doing.

He hated visiting the poor, and he kept away from them as much as possible.

He had no patron and no very rich friends.

His living was worth a bare four hundred a year, and he had no hope whatever of being able to exchange it for a more lucrative one.

He was doomed, or so it seemed, to linger out the remainder of his days at Whiteapple and find his last home in its churchyard.

He had been twice married. His first wife had died after a few years, leaving him with one child, Margery.

To her, having no other encumbrance at the time, he had been enabled to give a really good education.

But some years later, while Margery was still at school, he had married again, this time for money.

The second Mrs. Fermor brought her husband a dowry of six thousand pounds which in the course of as many years vanished into thin air, the result of certain unfortunate speculations in which the over-sanguine rector had been induced to embark, fascinated by the golden lures which had been dangled before his unpractical eyes.

Meanwhile he found himself the father of three small daughters and the husband of a wife who had settled down into the condition of a chronic invalid.

The poor rector would have gone distracted at this period had not his daughter Margery come to his rescue.

Girl though she was, she developed capabilities which might have done credit to a woman twice her age.

The reins of management were quietly withdrawn from the nerveless grasp of Mrs. Fermor, and all concerned felt the benefit of the change.

Mrs. Fermor herself had never been made so comfortable, never had her little whims and fancies been so carefully considered.

The children had never been looked after as they were now; a reign of economy in household matters succeeded one of waste and extravagance; while to the rector's home had never seemed so attractive since the death of Margery's mother as it did now.

Yet they all had a consciousness that there was a 'whip-hand' over them which would brook no nonsense.

There must be no jibbing, no rearing, no kicking over the traces, otherwise would the lash descend and no mercy be shown.

Even the Rev. Dyke himself stood somewhat in awe of his curly-headed, girlish-looking daughter, whose wishes and opinions he treated with a degree of deference he had never accorded to those of either of his wives.

And so the slow months waxed into years, and still Margery Fermor bloomed like a solitary rose in the garden of the old rectory deep hidden among the Derbyshire dales.

* * * * *

Mr. James Gascoigne made his appearance at the rectory in due course. He had traversed the three miles from Warley in one of the ancient flies of which a supply was always kept on hand at the Angler's Rest.

Six o'clock was the usual dinner hour at the rectory, and the Rev. Dyke had seen no reason why he should alter it in the present instance.

He accorded his guest a very hearty welcome, for, whatever he might be in other respects, he was genuinely hospitable.

Three minutes later Margery entered the drawing-room accompanied by Mrs. Jenrick, a still handsome widow of forty, who lived in her own very pleasant cottage ornee, within a bowshot of the rectory.

The vicar made the introductions in due form, and scarcely were they over when dinner was announced.

Margery wore white to-day, her only ornament being a damask rose in the bosom of her dress.

She made a charming picture, and Mr. Gascoigne evidently thought so, the gaze he bent on her so frequently betraying as much admiration as was compatible with good breeding.

Margery had cautioned Mrs. Jenrick, and, as a matter of course, neither of the ladies, when the introduction took place, allowed Mr. Gascoigne for one moment to suspect that they were conscious of there being anything out of the common in his appearance.

Mr. Gascoigne at table looked as other men look; he sat quite as high as his host, and his shoulders were nearly as broad, but had anyone peeped under the table they would have seen that the toes of his tiny dress-shoes barely touched the ground.

His features were good, and by many of the opposite sex he was doubtless considered an eminently handsome man.

His nose was aquiline, but not prominently so; he had wide-open hazel eyes and a very pleasant smile; hair, beard and moustache were of a dark reddish-brown.

His dress suit might almost be termed a work of art, so admirably did it fit him.

There were evident traces of shyness for the first few minutes in his manner towards the ladies, although it was far from being the shyness of rusticity; but it quickly wore away, and before long he seemed as much at his ease as if he had been in the habit of visiting at the rectory for many years.

It was then found that he could talk sensibly and well on a variety of topics.

He had evidently an intimate acquaintance with London and Paris, while he handled certain questions of the day after the fashion of one who is in the habit of speaking with some degree of authority. Of himself personally he made little mention.

Having a few idle weeks on his hands, he had sought out a quiet nook where he could sketch, or fish, or lie on his back in the sun and do nothing, without being called to account by anybody.

Later they had music. Here again Mr. Gascoigne was at home.

He had a pleasant light tenor voice, which had evidently been carefully cultivated, and he sang with taste and feeling several morceaux both English and Italian.

Music was Margery's one special accomplishment, and when Mr. Gascoigne praised her playing it was clear that he spoke from conviction and not from any desire to flatter her.

After that they had a stroll by the light of the young moon in the sweet-smelling garden, in which the fragrance of a hundred bygone summers seemed still to linger.

The rector and Mrs. Jenrick, who were cronies of long standing, paired naturally, leaving the younger couple to themselves.

It is possible that Mr. Gascoigne felicitated himself on his skill in drawing Margery out, when the petite white-robed figure, pacing so demurely by his side, began to talk of herself—of her dreams, her aspirations, her ignorance of the great world outside the village boundaries, and of her lonely but far from unhappy life at the old rectory. Simple-minded Mr. Gascoigne.

In any case, he seemed to derive great satisfaction from listening to the confessions of this tender little soul—so fresh, so virginal, so isolated, with an ignorance of life and all its burning questions which was at once amusing and pathetic in the naïveté of its expression.

The rector and the widow, to whom the garden by moonlight conjured up visions of rheumatism rather than of romance, had been deep in a game of bezique for some time before Margery—deeming, perhaps, that she had 'confessed' enough for one evening—and her companion went indoors.

A little later came Mr. Gascoigne's fly.

The rector wrung an easily extorted promise from his guest that this first visit should not be his last, besides which an arrangement was come to for certain fishing excursions to be taken in company.

To the Rev. Dyke, in the loneliness and isolation of Whiteapple, Mr. Gascoigne, fresh from the world of men and things, and brimful of information, came like a veritable godsend, and he resolved to secure as much of his society as possible while he had the chance of it.

Besides, might not certain other possibilities loom in the future!

When Mr. Gascoigne was gone the rector escorted Mrs. Jenrick as far as the gate of Jonquil Cottage, a ceremony he never pretermitted whenever the charming widow honored his roof with her presence.

Indeed, there were not wanting gossips in the village to whisper that whenever it should please Providence to remove Mrs. Fermor number two from this vale of tears, people would not have far to look for Mrs. Fermor number three.

Here it may be mentioned that, such a nonentity had Mrs. Fermor number two by this time become, and so much did her maladies, real and imaginary, keep her to the rooms set apart for her, it had not been deemed necessary, as far as Mr. Gascoigne was concerned, even to allude to the existence of such a person.

"I would give something to know who and what our new friend really is," said the Rev. Dyke to his daughter on his return from escorting Mrs. Jenrick home.

"You have formed some opinion about him, papa, I've no doubt. What would you guess him to be?"

"I take him to be a man of independent means; not necessarily rich, but sufficiently well-to-do to be able to live without working—a condition of affairs I would gladly imitate were I in a position to do so. He is a man who has traveled, who has read, and who has thought—three things which do not always go together. He is evidently worth cultivating, and we must endeavor to ascertain more about him. It's a pity Dame Nrture has played him such a scurvy trick. But for that there might have been—who knows?—a chance for Margery Daw."

He pointed the tips of his fingers together and smiled meaningly at his daughter.

"Papa," answered Margery, who was not smiling at all, "I am nearly sure that I have found out who Mr. Gascoigne really is."

"The dickens you have! But how did you make the discovery?"

"That I will tell you presently. If I'm right in my supposition, our visitor of to-day is known to the world at large as the Earl of Cheshunt."

The rector stared agape at his daughter for a few moments as though bereft of the faculty of speech.

"The moment I set eyes on him," resumed Margery, "I experienced an odd sense of having seen him somewhere before. All through dinner I was puzzling my brains trying to recall where and when I had met him. At length the knowledge came to me in a flash. You will remember that at different times Johnny Transom has sent us a copy of "The Buttonholder"—the society journal that issues cartoons of all sorts of celebrities.

"Well, I felt nearly sure either that Mr. Gascoigne, or someone very much like him, had been caricatured in one of the cartoons in question. When we left the table I made an excuse to Mrs. Jenrick and ran up to the lumber-room. There, after hunting for a few minutes, I found the number of "The Buttonholder" I *was* in search of. If Mr. Gascoigne and Lord Cheshunt be not one and the same person, then must Nature in their case have done what she very rarely does—duplicated her handiwork."

"This is most extraordinary! most astounding!" gasped the rector. "You did not say a word of your discovery to Mrs. Jenrick?"

"Papa, what do you take me for?"

With that Margery ran upstairs and presently reappeared with the number of "The Buttonholder" containing the cartoon of the Earl of Cheshunt, which she gave to her father.

The rector's hands trembled a little as he placed his glasses on his nose.

He gazed at the caricature long and earnestly; then he said in his most unctuous, ecclesiastical tones:

"It is quite evident, my dear, that we have been entertaining, not an angel, but a peer of the realm, unawares."

"Which I have no doubt is much the same thing in the eyes of a great many people," said Margery slyly.

The rector turned to the brief notice of his lordship which accompanied the caricature.

"There is no more popular member of the Four-in-Hand Club than the Earl of Cheshunt," began the notice, "and few more skilful 'whips' than he have ever tooled a drag between the Magazine and Hurlingham.

"Jimmy, as his intimates delight to call him, is known as a first-rate judge of the points of either a race-horse or a collie; and if his knowledge of human nature hardly equals his knowledge of matters equine and canine, that is a little defect, if we may venture to call it so, which every added year will tend to lessen. It is an secret that his lordship's well-known good-nature has been taken advantage of on more occasions than one in a way that few people would be likely to forget, and it is much to his credit that he seems no whit soured or rendered misanthropical by the buffets he has had to put up with.

"It, as is well known, he is peculiarly sensitive in respect of a certain physical peculiarity, he can plead the example of one of his country's greatest poets, who was equally 'touchy' on the score of his little peculiarity.

"That his lordship is much sought after by matchmaking mammas goes without saying, seeing that not only is his rent-roll a very handsome one, and his property wholly unencumbered, but that the accumulations of his long minority (he came into the title when he was twelve years old) made up a nest-egg such as, metaphorically speaking, might well cause the mouth of any dowager with marriageable daughters to water, and almost justify her in the adoption of any means which would secure to one of her brood the position of wife to its fortunate possessor.

"So far, however, his lordship has succeeded in eluding all the decoys and snares which have been set for him, although how long he will continue to do so is probably as little known to himself as to anyone."

"Oh! Madge, my darling," murmured the rector with a deep sigh as he laid down the paper and removed his glasses. The

eyes of father and daughter met. There was no need for another word.

* * * * * *

It was a month later, and Mr. James Gascoigne, otherwise the Earl of Cheshunt, was reclining in an easy chair in his private sitting-room at the Angler's Rest, with his little legs stretched out on another chair.

He was cogitating over a very serious question—the most serious, in fact, that had ever confronted him.

He was deeply in love with the daughter of the rector of Whiteapple, and the question he was now putting to himself was: Should he, or should he not, ask her to become his wife?

He had been hit through his armor more than once in days gone by, but all previous hurts had been as scratches in comparison with the wound he was now suffering from.

He felt that only she who inflicted the hurt could heal it; nowhere else was there any remedy for him.

During the season just over such a dead set had been made at him from the matrimonial point of view, that in sheer disgust with which, it may be, a little fear was mingled—he had thrown over two or three country-house engagements in order to bury himself for a time in this out-of-the-way spot, where not a creature knew him as other than Mr. Gascoigne.

Yet now it seemed as if he had merely come here on purpose to court the fate he had fled from elsewhere.

But, then, how different were the circumstances!

At length the secret dream of his life seemed on the eve of realization—his dream of winning the heart of some sweet girl who would care for him, for himself alone.

And he felt nearly sure that he had so won the heart of Margery Fermor. Half unconsciously he repeated to himself the Laureate's lines:

> If my heart by signs can tell,
> Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,
> And I think thou lov'st me well.

That he was desperately enamored was not to be denied, and yet he shrank, with a feeling of timidity of which he was half ashamed, from taking the final plunge.

But things could not go on much longer as they were.

One way or the other he must make up his mind, and that before he was many days older.

That morning's post had brought him a pressing invitation to join his friend, Gus Frewin, in a trip to the East, about which they had often talked.

Should he write to Gus and say that he would join him in a couple of days, or should he propose to the rector of Whiteapple's daughter?

Although he put these questions to himself, he had a consciousness that it was all but a foregone conclusion what the answer to them would be.

He was bound in toils from which he felt that it was next to impossible for him to escape.

On one point his mind was made up. Should Margery Fermor accept him, it should be as plain Mr. Gascoigne.

Not till after this marriage—nay, not till after the return from the honeymoon, should his secret be divulged, if anyhow it were possible to keep it.

And then the surprise! the enlightenment!

More than once had he rehearsed it smilingly to himself, grouping the actors in it after the fashion of a tableau at the wind-up of a comedietta.

At the very time that his lordship, taking his ease in his inn, was thus anxiously pondering a certain momentous question, the same question was being discussed by the rector and his daughter from their point of view.

In the course of the day following that of Mr. Gascoigne's first visit to the rectory Miss Fermor strolled over to Jonquil Cottage, ostensibly for the sake of a little gossip with Mrs. Jenrick, but in reality with quite a different object in view.

She had remembered that in the widow's bookcase was a volume of "Dod," which, although it dated back some three or four years, would doubtless supply her with the information she was so anxious to obtain.

She had always had the run of Mrs. Jenrick's bookcase; it was nothing fresh for her to choose a book out of it and take it home to read.

After she had taken down half-a-dozen volumes this afternoon, and had glanced casually at them, she took down the "Dod."

Chatting to the widow meanwhile, a minute sufficed her to find what she really wanted.

There, among other particulars, she read as follows:

"James Bevan Fitz-Julian Gascoigne, fifth Earl of Cheshunt. Born 18—, succeeded to the title 18—. Beltock Park, Northumberland; Marish House, Essex; No. 58 Trevanion Square, London."

The words danced before Margery's eyes for a moment or two; then, with a gentle suspiration, she shut up the volume and put it back in its place.

Seeing, however, that one cannot be too sure of one's facts in matters of importance, Margery wrote next day to Johnny Transom, son of the late Dr. Transom of Whiteapple, Margery's playfellow in days gone by, and at present a bank clerk in London, asking him to obtain for her a portrait of Lord Cheshunt and forward it with as little delay as possible.

She was quite aware that there was nothing in the world Johnny wouldn't do to please her.

Four days later the likeness—a cabinet-size half-length photograph—came duly to hand.

Johnny wrote that he had had some difficulty in obtaining it, Lord Cheshunt not being much of a public character; but there it was.

Any doubt as to the personality of "Mr. Gascoigne" which might have lingered in the mind of either the rector or his daughter was now dispelled.

Since then, as already stated, a month had gone by.

"I have a presentiment that Mr. Gascoigne will propose to-morrow, or, at the latest, the day after," said Margery to her father. "He has been on the see-saw for the last week."

"You will refer him to me, as a matter of course?"

"Pardon me, papa, but I don't think I shall do anything of the kind."

The rector stared at her aghast. "But, surely, you are not going to reject him!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE ARTIST ABROAD.

MODERN painters, or at least the majority of them, deem it their duty to attempt to secure a certain amount of chronological and local consistency in their pictures.

They refrain, for example, from arming the participators in the siege of Troy with firearms, and from dressing Pliny the Elder in a pair of five dollar trousers.

But the artists of former ages did not always feel it incumbent upon them to pay attention to such details.

They had very little regard for what we call local color; and they perpetrated with impunity anachronisms which would nowadays cause their works to be jeered at.

Even our great-grandfathers saw nothing particularly anomalous in the appearance on the stage of Hamlet in a bagwig, or of Macbeth in a three-cornered hat and small-clothes.

The indifference with which these matters were treated, both by artists and critics, in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, is inexplicable.

It produced results which, judged by modern standards of correctness, are exceedingly ludicrous.

But the spectacle of the artist abroad, though now much rarer than it used to be, is still far from uncommon.

In almost every modern picture gallery you may find little inconsistencies and anachronisms which jar upon your sense of what should be; and occasionally you may discover that the very eagerness of the painter to express local color or to be correct has seduced him into the absurdest sloughs of error.

A living Academician provides a well-known case in point.

He painted a fine picture of the "Last Supper;" and, while he was at work, it seems to have occurred to him that something ought to be introduced to localize the scene.

In the mouth, therefore, of an open basket, which occupies a corner of the canvas, he painted, two or three "Jerusalem" artichokes.

He evidently supposed that "Jerusalem" artichokes were in some way connected with the city of Jerusalem, and did not know that "Jerusalem," as used in this connection, is merely a corruption of the Italian word "girasole," which means "turner to the sun," and which is applied to the sunflower genus of plants.

Of this genus, what we call "Jerusalem" artichoke, but which is not an artichoke at all, is a species.

To a sumptuous French translation of the "Metamorphoses" of Ovid, Sebastian le Clerc, who died in 1714, contributed thirty-eight charming etchings, which are full of inconsistencies and anachronisms.

In one, the sisters of Phaeton are shown surrounding one of the conventional urn-surmounted tombs which were quite unknown before the seventeenth century; in another, Apollo is seen walking in a gallery which is built in the style of Louis XIV.; in a third, a Centaur is standing at what seems to be the door of an Italian tavern, such as may still be met with all over the Peninsula; in a fourth, Semiramis directs some building operations which are being carried on by the aid of just such machinery as Le Clerc must have been familiar with; in a fifth, a classical god is seated in an apartment which is evidently copied from one at Versailles; in a sixth, a classical goddess plays on a violoncello; in a seventh, Phineus sits on a chair at a circular table, and there is a palpable popper castor close at hand; and in an eighth, some transactions are taking place in a room which is lighted by means of large glass windows.

But these sins of Le Clerc are all very small in comparison with the sins of others.

The painter, Claude, was a sinner of a persistent character.

In his "Embarkation of St. Ursula," in the National Gallery, are ships such as were in use in 1650, and in his "Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba" are similar ships, Italian villas, and a stone bridge built on modern principles.

Into his "Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca" he introduces a magnificent river with a waterfall which might vie with that of Niagara.

Lucas van Leyden dressed his Joel, the wife of Heber, in a bonnet of the sixteenth century.

Albrecht Durer found room for a tent-bedstead, a large cooking-range, and modern-shaped candles in his "Birth of the Virgin;" and Boccaccio Boccaccino, in his "Procession to Calvary," shows us a large river crowded with shipping.

In Paul Veronese's "Family of Darius before Alexander," and in Crovelli's "Annunciation," as well as in Peruzzi's "Adoration of the Magi," we find unmistakable Italian architecture; and in Carlo Maratti's "Annunciation" there is a pair of scissors.

In Martin Schoen's "Death of the Virgin" there are fifteenth-century houses; in a "Magdalen" by Henrik de Bles there is an illuminated missal; and in Bono of Ferrara's "Jerome in the Desert," the fact of the scene being a desert seems to have been forgotten, for the spire of a village church peers above the village trees at a distance of about two hundred yards from the saint.

A very similar church steeple figures in Pietri de Cortone's "Reconciliation of Jacob and Laban in the Mountains of Mesopotamia."

None of these inconsistencies are, however, so gross as one which was perpetrated by a Spanish artist.

He actually introduced a pistol into a biblical scene.

One does not feel sure that Vandyck, in his "Miraculous Draught of Fishes," was justified in representing one of the apostles in sea-boots; nor that Paul Veronese ought to have let Italian peasants with felt slouch hats appear in his "Adoration of the Magi."

Yet even these slips cannot compare for enormity with the error of the Dutch painter who depicted several of his countrymen gazing, with pipes in their mouths, at David carrying the head of Goliath.

We have already given, from Le Clerc, an example of the unauthorized appearance of a violoncello in a picture that deals with a classical subject.

It appears, however, to have been generally supposed by the artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that not only violoncellos, but violins and guitars as well, were in common use in very early ages.

Cosmo Tura, Jean Bellin, and others afford plenty of illustrations of this belief.

Chello della Fuora goes further, and shows us a Madonna pouring what can only be coffee out of what can only be a beautifully engraved coffee pot; while Luigi Cigoli gives us a picture of the aged Simeon assisting at the Circumcision in horn-rimmed spectacles.

Of course a pair of spectacles is an attribute of an old man; but, unfortunately, spectacles were not invented until 1299.

Brughel, in his "Adoration of the Magi," equally violated probability and sobriety by dressing an Ethiopian king in boots, spurs, and a surplice; but, if he had shown the Ethiopian in the costume which an Ethiopian king of the first century did wear, the picture might not have found favor in the eyes of a school which, whatever may be its faults, cannot be accused of too scantily clothing its figures.

AMONG SAVAGES.—No one who understands how human life is is estimated by savage peoples will doubt the shocking and revolting accounts of travelers regarding this phase of the traffic, and no one who knows what an Arab's heart is made of will make any discount even for the exaggeration of an orator, as he listens to the following citation:

The men who appear the strongest and whose escape is to be feared, have their hands tied, and sometimes their feet, in such fashion that walking becomes a torture to them; and on their necks are placed yokes which attach several of them together.

They march all day; at night, when they stop to rest, a few handfuls of raw 'sorgho' are distributed among the captives. This is all their food. Next morning they must start again.

But after the first day or two the fatigue, the sufferings and the privations have weakened a great many. The women and the aged are the first to halt. Then, in order to strike terror into this miserable mass of human beings, their conductors, armed with a wooden bar to economize powder, approach those who appear to be the most exhausted, and deal them a terrible blow on the nape of the neck.

The unfortunate victims utter a cry and fall to the ground in the convulsions of death. The terrified troop immediately resumes its march.

Terror has imbued even the weakest with new strength. Each time some one breaks down the same horrible scene is repeated. At night, on arriving at their halting place, after the first days of such a life, a not less frightful scene awaits them.

The traffickers in human flesh have acquired by experience a knowledge of how much their victims can endure. A glance shows them those who will soon sink from weariness; then to economize the scanty food which they distribute they pass behind these wretched beings and fell them with a single blow.

Their corpses remain where they fall when they are not suspended on the branches of the neighboring trees; and it is close to them that their companions are obliged to eat and to sleep. But what sleep! It may be easily imagined.

Few take care to live well, but many to live long.

Scientific and Useful.

TANNING BY ELECTRICITY.—Leather is now tanned by electricity. The process consists in subjecting the hides in contact with ordinary tanning materials (without acids) to the action of a current of electricity on a revolving drum. The saving of time is very great—two to four days instead of three to nine months—while the cost is reduced to four cents instead of eight.

A PHOTOGRAPHING PHONOGRAPH.—An invention which has already been foreshadowed is reported from Mexico. By speaking in a photophone transmitter, which consists of a highly polished diaphragm, reflecting a ray of light, this ray is set into vibration and a photograph is made of it on a travelling band of paper. If the image of this photographic tracing is projected by means of an electric arc or oxy-hydrogen light upon a selenium receiver, the original speech is then heard.

THREADS MADE OF STONE.—Fibres of unequalled fineness, useful for scientific purposes, can now be made by melting rock crystal in an oxy-hydrogen jet and drawing it into threads, then drawing these threads into the finest fibres by attaching them to the tail of an arrow, which is shot from a cross bow. Threads of less than 1-10,000 of an inch are produced, and they are stronger than steel. Their ends cannot be traced with a microscope, and are certainly less than a millionth of an inch in diameter.

OXYGEN IN INDUSTRIES.—Oxygen is now prepared at a cost of not more than $1,75 per thousand cubic feet, and it bids fair to come into extensive use for various purposes. It is almost always the true agent in bleaching operations, and a stream of the gas applied to the bleaching of paper pulp has made a saving of thirty per cent. It can be used in the purification of illuminating gas; and when applied to the maturing of spirits mellows them in ten days as if they had been kept for several years.

LEATHER MADE OF WOOD.—An Austrian scientist has a process for the manufacture of leather from red beechwood. The best wood for the purpose is taken from fifty to sixty-year-old trees, cut in the spring, which must be worked up immediately, bark peeled off, steamed, treated with chemicals in a kettle under pressure, and exposed to several more operations, which the inventor does not mention, as he wants to have them patented. From the prepared wood strong and thin pieces are made by means of heavy pressure. The inventor states that a solid sole leather can be obtained, which, he claims, is superior to animal leather in firmness and durability and can be worked up in the same way as animal leather, nailed and sewed.

Farm and Garden.

SWILL.—Sour swill is not as suitable for swine as is good fresh buttermilk or whey. Many ailments of swine are due to feeding the hogs continually of swill that is under a high degree of fermentation, much of it being entirely unfit for any purpose but to be thrown on the manure heap.

FARMERS' VISITS.—The practice of paying fraternal visits to neighboring farmers' organizations is recommended as a means of widening our acquaintance and the promotion of a fraternal spirit. And when you go visiting try to have something interesting to say to add to the pleasure of the meeting.

THE CHINCH BUG.—The common quail is the best exterminator of the chinch bug, and is followed by the prairie chicken. If protection were given these birds and they were provided with opportunity for increase, and considered to be private property, the insect pest would undoubtedly be very much decreased.

LIME.—Whenever ground that is heavily covered with green growth is plowed under it will pay to broadcast at least ten bushels of lime per acre over the ground. Lime assists in decomposing the plants that are turned under, and acts on the soil in a manner to induce it to yield up a greater proportion of nutrition for the support of the next crop.

POULTRY.—During the warm weather live poultry suffer from thirst when shipped to market in coops. The fowls should never be crowded. Nearly all the coops that come in contain twice as many fowls as they should have, and some of them die on the journey. Plenty of food with drinking cups at several points of the coop, should always be provided.

WEEDS.—Weeds must not only be kept down but destroyed. The mistake in cultivating the field in order to get rid of weeds is that such work is too much of a temporary job. Weeds are treated as transient customers, when in reality they are the most permanent and persistent crops that appear. It is not sufficient for the farmer to simply endeavor to protect his growing crops from weeds, but he must, if possible, clean out the weeds entirely.

ROOTS.—When a root is cut off it begins immediately to heal by forming granulations between the bark and wood. In four or five years the stronger ones of these push off away from the tree, and must be again cut by pruning or transplanting to keep them within bounds. If the trees are carefully dug two or three years after this root-pruning process it will be seen that all the fibrous roots will be obtained, as they do not extend far from the tree.

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Peace and Happiness.

It has been well said, "The deepest want of man is not a desire for happiness, but a craving for peace."

And so intense is the human craving for peace, and so intolerable the unsatisfied craving, that men catch at and content themselves with spurious imitations of peace.

They will get peace at any cost; they cannot live without it, and so they sometimes care little whether it be true or false, lasting or transient.

For example, thousands of men and women are at peace. They live quiet, easy-going lives, without anxiety or sense of danger. They go drifting on through life, year after year finding them much the same. They hope that somehow or other it will go well with them at the last; that as it has fared with thousands so it will fare with them.

They are as good as others, better in some respects. Of course they have infirmities and failings—who has not? Of course they might be better; so might any one be. Of course, if they were to begin life again, they would act differently in some things, but then so would every one. So they are at peace. No sermons will alarm them; they have got over that.

Their theology just suits their own case; it is an easy, comfortable, accommodating, soporific system, and they are at peace. But it is a peace that slowly and surely ends in the peace of death.

It is an absolute fact that numbers of persons have never really thought for five minutes together about what is required of them.

We can scarcely talk of their being at peace. They have never been ruffled in their inmost soul except for a passing hour. Some judgment, a sudden death, a sickness, a loss—these perhaps shot through them a sort of cold shuddering sensation, a dread vague and painful, a shrinking from something they could not describe.

They endured it, they grieved, they were depressed; for a time their usual spirits forsook them, but that was all—it soon passed away.

Back came the old life of buying and selling, getting and saving, spending and enjoying, losing and retrieving, or the old round of pleasure and amusement, visiting and receiving, talking and gossiping; and in the busy life or the frivolous life, as the case may be, there is no anxious thought about the future, except the future of their business, their investments, their retirement, or the future of their pleasures, their prospects, their entertainments.

They are, in a sense, at peace, for no terrors, no stings of conscience, no vision of the judgment-seat ever disturb these godless, selfish, unlovely, wasted souls of theirs.

They are at peace, but it is like the peace of a stagnant murky pool in the recesses of a mountain cavern.

There is a type of character, the most plausible, found even amongst persons who are true hearted, generous and noble natured. Peace may be found in a sense of self-satisfaction at duties well performed—duties personal, domestic, social, public, religious.

It is a delicate task to analyze and discriminate between what is right and true and what is sinful and false in this peace. For is there not a peace of conscience which ought to come to us when we have done our duty to the best of our ability?

Ought we not to find peace when we have attended church, listened to the sermon, said our prayers?

Is not the sense of peace that succeeds an echo heard in the chambers of the heart of the whisper of God's approval, as He breathes within our souls the words, "Peace be unto you!"

Let us especially fix our thoughts on this one point. The mere performance of duty is not enough to merit His approval. Apart from motive and purpose, apart from love and faith, duty well done cannot bring peace.

It may have been successful, satisfactory; good men may commend it, and we may feel at peace as we think it over; but if duty has been left out of it altogether, if no pure motive made the duty sacred and the work blessed, then the peace is not true peace.

Is not this a common danger even to the best amongst us—the temptation to do our daily work not *for* God, but merely *for* ourselves or for others, and, because we ourselves are well pleased with it, to think God is well pleased, though, indeed, we had taken no account of Him?

We did it heartily, but not "as unto the Lord." Self was the centre, not God. Self pleasing was our motive, or, if not a conscious self-pleasing, perhaps our work was motiveless; we did it mechanically, and nowhere, in any of the springs of the machinery, or even in the inmost recess of our spirits, consciously or unconsciously, confessed or secret, lurked there the fear and love of God.

And therefore, though the task was well done, the duty carefully fulfilled, the result satisfactory, and the peace of mind that followed comforting and refreshing, still it was not "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," not the peace in which God will keep them whose minds are stayed on Him.

MAN must have occupation or be miserable. Toil is the price of sleep and appetite, of health and enjoyment. The very necessity which overcomes our natural sloth is a blessing. The whole world does not contain even a briar or thorn which Nature could have spared. We are happier with the sterility, which we can overcome by industry, than we could have been with spontaneous plenty and unbounded profusion. The body and the mind are improved by the toil that fatigues them. The toil is a thousand times rewarded by the pleasures which it bestows. Its enjoyments are peculiar. No wealth can purchase them—no indolence can taste them. They flow only from the exertions which repay the laborer.

THE sweetest, the most clinging affection, is often shaken by the slightest breath of unkindness, as the delicate rings and tendrils of the vine are agitated by the faintest air that blows in summer. An unkind word from one beloved often draws blood from many a heart which would defy the battle-axe of hatred, or the keenest edge of vindicative satire. Nay, the shade, the gloom of the face, familiar and dear, awakens pain. These are the little thorns which incommode persons of a refined turn in their journey through this life.

WE know that friends who love one another become like to each other; they catch the very tones of each other's voices; they exchange the very look of each other's countenances—features the most dissimilar acquire a strange likeness of expression. So it is with our souls, if we live in the habit of prayer; that is, of conversing and of speaking with our divine Friend.

WHY, man of idleness, labor has rocked you in the cradle and nourished your pampered life; without it, the woven silk and wool upon your back would be in the shepherd's fold. For the meanest thing that ministers to human want, save the air of heaven, man is indebted to toil; and even the air, in God's wise ordination, is breathed with labor.

THERE is a certain sort of man whose doom in the world is disappointment, who excels in it, and whose luckless triumphs in his meek career of life, I have often thought, must be regarded by the kind eyes above with as much favor as the splendid successes and achievements of coarser and more prosperous men.

WHAT a solemn and striking admonition to youth is that inscribed on the dial at All Souls, Oxford—"the hours perish, and are laid to our charge,"—for time, like life, can never be recalled. Melancthon noted down the time lost by him, that he might thereby reanimate his industry, and not lose an hour.

WHAT the sculptor is to a block of marble, education is to a human soul. The philosopher, the saint, or the hero, the wise, the good, or the great man, very often lies hid and concealed in a plebeian, which a proper education might have disinterred and have brought to light.

HUMAN faculties are common, but that which converges these faculties into my identity separates me from every other man. That other man cannot think my thoughts, he cannot speak my words, he cannot do my works. He cannot have my sins, I cannot have his virtues.

THE fountain of content must spring up in the mind; and he who has so little knowledge of human nature as to seek happiness by changing anything but his own disposition will waste his life in fruitless efforts, and multiply the griefs which he proposes to remove.

IT is best to hope only for things possible and probable. He that hopes too much shall deceive himself at last, especially if his industry does not go along with his hopes; for hope without action is a barren undoer.

IT is when our budding hopes are nipped beyond recovery by some rough wind that we are the most disposed to picture to ourselves what flowers they might have borne if they had flourished.

WHEN a man is made up wholly of the dove, without the least grain of the serpent in his composition, he becomes ridiculous in many circumstances of life, and very often discredits his best actions.

IF you have great talents, industry will improve them; if moderate abilities, industry will supply their deficiencies. Nothing is denied to well-directed labor; nothing is ever to be attained without it.

HE that falls into sin is a man, that grieves at it is a saint, that boasteth of it is a devil; yet some glory in that shame, counting the stains of sin the best complexion of their souls.

EVERY single gross act of sin is much the same thing to the conscience that a great blow or fall is to the head; it stuns and bereaves it of all use of its senses for a time.

THERE is a vast difference between sins of infirmity and those of presumption, as vast as between inadvertency and deliberation.

MEN, scanning the surface, count the wicked happy; they see not the frightful dreams that crowd a bad man's pillow.

AS sins proceed they ever multiply, and, like figures in arithmetic, the last stand for more than all that went before it.

The World's Happenings.

London has just had a bull dog show.

Leprosy is said to be increasing in Russia.

A Vienna lad of six attempted suicide to escape a strapping.

"Pigs in clover" for a penny is the rage on the streets of London just now.

Wisconsin educators are discussing a proposition to establish baths in the public schools.

West Virginia has a new industry, the making of "Spanish cedar cigar boxes" out of poplar.

From Buckport, Me., it is reported that a cat is sitting on a dozen eggs which a hen had deserted.

Unscrupulous railroad hands in Georgia have been stealing signal lights from along the tracks.

President Harrison's favorite neckwear is a turndown collar and a black ribbed silk four-in-hand tie.

The Henry irrigating ditch is the largest in Colorado, being 74 miles long, 8 feet deep and 20 feet wide.

"Les Buffalistes" in Paris now means the fair dames who crowd so frequently to see the great Bill.

People in Erie county, N. Y., want a day set apart for the waging of a general war on caterpillars.

Undoubtedly the meanest thieves in the country are to be found at Troy. They steal crape from door-knobs.

Six eloping Kentucky couples enabled a Jeffersonville, Ind., justice to make $25 in marriage fees in a little while the other day.

Wright Burke, of Troup county, Ga., has been married 15 years and has 14 children—twins five times, triplets once, and one solitary and alone.

Leading statisticians of England assert that more persons annually choke to death while eating in England than are killed on the English railroads.

In Russia every man found inebriated in the public street is imprisoned, and when he has recovered from his intoxication is set to sweep the streets for a day.

According to a Georgia item "Greensborough has a rooster that climbs a tree by using his spurs as a telegraph lineman uses his leg-spikes in ascending a telegraph pole."

A father of 18 children applied to the Clackamas county, Oregon, authorities for support. The children have been notified that if they do not support the old man the law will be invoked to make them do so.

A telegraph lineman fell from a cross bar of a pole at New Haven, and, after descending 25 feet, struck astride a horse that stood below. The horse was knocked down, but the man escaped with slight injuries.

America publishes more papers than all the rest of the world combined. Last year its 37,107 periodicals printed the enormous number of 2,950,588,320 copies—enough to supply every soul on earth with two copies.

A mean-spirited lover, who was rejected by his sweetheart at Westborough, Neb., because he would not vote the Prohibitory ticket, bought up $30,000 worth of mortgages against her father, foreclosed them, and turned the whole family into the street.

John A. Phillips, colored, of Chepachet, Mass., has spent 13 years in State prison on two sentences. In each case he was convicted on the testimony of his own wife and daughter. Now it has been ascertained that the women perjured themselves, and that he is an innocent and terribly wronged man.

Twin girls, weighing together only five pounds, eleven ounces, were born in New York a few days ago. The smaller one weighed two pounds, eight ounces. The attending physician, in his report to the Bureau of Vital Statistics, said that "the babies were healthy, possessed of good lungs and pleasant in appearance."

A telegram from Marion, Ohio, has the following: "Mayor Galley yesterday took the school boys who were born in 1876 to a circus, and afterward to a restaurant, where they were treated to ice cream. His idea was to find the number of boys who were born in that year, and thus honor his son, who was born in 1876, and is now dead."

A queer robbery was committed at Cambridge City, Ind., lately. Some person, evidently acquainted with the surroundings, took a crowbar and removed the corner-stone of the Baptist church from its place in the wall of the building. He was poorly repaid for his trouble, however, as the receptacle beneath it contained only a few coins.

The iniquity of the system of child-marriage, which still prevails in India, was recently exposed in a Bombay Court. A man of 47 was charged with cruelty to his wife, whose age was only 9. He had beaten her and threatened to kill her if she failed to undo a knot in his hair within five days. In the course of the evidence it came out that the father of the child sold her to the accused for 20 rupees a month.

The death of a wealthy and eccentric old man at Tyler, Texas, says a Southern exchange, has brought to light a remarkable will. The old man had no relations, and in his last will and testament he directs all his property to be divided equally among all the persons living in the Southern States who were born on his birthday, the 9th of March, 1813. The amount of the fortune to be distributed is not mentioned, but it is said to be very large.

A dramatic sketch was in progress in Birmingham, England, during which a sailor is drugged and murdered. A sailor in the audience leaped from the gallery on to the stage, declaring with an oath that he would not see a comrade come to harm. The officials of the hall were floored one after another by the man in his desperate efforts to reach the stage robbers, and four policemen only removed him after a violent struggle. He was perfectly sober.

THE SECRET.

BY S. J. CASSELL.

He said, "No one shall ever learn
  This secret that my heart must keep;
No matter how the words may burn,
  No matter how my heart may leap,
No one shall know I love her so,
No one shall know, no one shall know!"

But though his lips were tightly sealed
  The very birds his secret guessed;
For in his eyes it was revealed,
  And in his face it was confessed—
"I love her so, I love her so;
But none shall know, none shall know!"

Some time all secrets must unfold,
  And soon did he a listener seek,
To whom his story might be told,
  Before the laughing world should speak
And tell her (if she did not know)
He loved her so, he loved her so!"

Princess Dormanoff.

BY JOSEPHINE ERROL.

As Gilbert Lovelace sat at breakfast one chill February morning, trifling with a *foie gras* and sipping his chocolate, he took up his mother's letter again, and perused it slowly.

It did not contain much news; only urged him to come and see her and his father as soon as he possibly could; inquired if he had yet heard to which embassy he was likely to be attached; and concluded by telling him that the quaint Valley House, the nearest residence to their own, being only a mile distant, was let at last to a Russian princess, some of whose people had already arrived, and were engaged in beautifying and decorating it for her occupation.

"Wonder who she is?" he murmured. "Russian is only another name for Nihilist, and Europe is pretty well honeycombed with secret societies. Perhaps she is an emissary from one of them, bent upon a mission that will bring terrorism and assassination into our quiet corner of England."

And then he laughed at his own fancies; for what should take a woman of that type to quiet Derlock, a remote village, little more than a hamlet, in South Devon, with the cottages sprinkled here and there in the valley and on the hill-sides sparsely, like plums in a schoolboy's pudding, and boasting only three gentlemen's residences?

So, dismissing the subject from his mind, he took up a morning paper and was soon deep in politics, and had forgotten all about the Russian princess and her old house in the Devonshire valley by the time he strolled out to his club.

A fortnight later, in response to a summons from his father, he was speeding in a hansom to Paddington, en route for Derlock, and arrived at the station with very little time to spare; for when his portmanteau was stored up aloft on the rack, his bear-rug adjusted over his knees, and half-a-dozen papers strewn on the seat beside him, there was just one minute to the starting-time.

He had the compartment to himself, and was congratulating himself on that fact, when just as the guard signalled the engine-driver that all was right, the door of the carriage was thrown open, and a lady entered quickly, yet not hurriedly, and with a grace of movement that nothing it seemed would disturb or destroy, and after her leapt a huge black-and-gray hound, while the door was slammed by a dark, strange-looking man, of whom Lovelace caught only a fleeting glimpse, for the next moment the train glided out of the station, and they were launched on their journey southwards.

He naturally glanced with some curiosity at his companion. She had seated herself in the far corner of the carriage, the dog sitting up gravely beside her, and when he looked, was in the act of picking up a splendid rug, composed of some rare birds' feathers on cloth, to wrap around her, though from her ankles to her dimpled chin she was wrapped in fur, and a small fur cap rested on her jet-black hair somewhat jauntily.

She caught him in the act of looking at her, and leaning forward, said in a singularly clear, sweet tone, though with a decided foreign accent:

"I hope you do not object to my dog being in the car."

"Not at all," Lovelace assured her eagerly. "I am very fond of dogs myself, often traveling with a brace of spaniels."

"Ah, but Ivan is such a great fellow," stroking his massive head with her daintily gloved hand, "he takes up so much room. There was no time, however, to put him elsewhere, and even had there been, I should be loth to part with him even for a time." And she drew the fierce-looking head down to her shoulder and caressed it tenderly.

"I should think so," rejoined the young man. "One is never quite sure of finding one's dog safe in the box at the end of the journey, and I can well understand your prising such a splendid animal. I have never seen one like him. What is he?"

"A Russian wolf-hound."

"I have seen some dogs in this country said to be of that breed, but they were neither so large nor so handsome."

"No. Ivan comes of a race that my people have prided themselves on for over a hundred years. A finer specimen could not be found if Russia were searched from Varungar to the Caucasus."

"I can quite believe it. Is he friendly to strangers?" inquired the young man, drawing nearer.

"Yes; if I tell him to be so."

And murmuring a few words in some outlandish tongue, she made the great beast stretch out his paw and lay it in Gilbert's hand.

"How do you do?" laughed Lovelace, shaking the huge paw. "Glad to make your acquaintance, for you are a splendid fellow. But I don't think you return the compliment."

And indeed the dog was looking from him to his mistress with a glance of almost human intelligence, as though asking if it were her pleasure that he should sit there and allow a stranger to take liberties with him, or whether he should fly at him, as he had often done at the great gray wolves in his own country, and rend and tear and destroy?

"Ivan," she began, again whispering in his ear those strange words, that were guttural when uttered even by her clear voice, and smiling; and Gilbert thought she was just the loveliest creature he had ever seen when that smile broke like sunlight over her face.

She was a regally beautiful woman; tall, and as far as he could judge, finely made, her head well set on her throat, her shoulders sloping and graceful.

Her skin was pale and clear, and wonderfully fair for a dark woman—for of course he decided in his own mind that she was dark, having black hair, and straight black brows and thick jetty lashes that shaded the loveliest pair of blue eyes he had ever seen; blue and deep as his own, which he inherited from his Irish mother, the rare Celtic orbs that are always so beautiful.

Her features were straight, the whole type of her face aristocratic, and the dimple in her chin made the observer forget that it was a trifle too determined and prominent and indicative of an indomitable will that nothing could break or destroy.

"It is a long journey into this Devonshire," remarked the lady, when the short winter's day was rapidly merging into night, as she drew her furs closer round her and glanced out at the snow-covered country, with a little involuntary shiver.

"Devonshire," he repeated. "Are you going there?"

"Yes."

"Then you have three hours' more traveling before you," exclaimed Lovelace, delighted at the prospect of being in her society for that time.

"Indeed! Do you know this route well?" she asked, playing with the dog's ears.

"Yes; very well. My father's place is at Derlock."

"Really! Then we shall be neighbors," she said, suddenly lifting her beautiful eyes and giving him a long glance.

"Neighbors! How? Why?" he inquired eagerly.

"I have taken a house near there."

"Is it possible? Can it be you that have taken the Valley House?"

"I believe that is its name," she rejoined indifferently; "but I know very little about it. Paulo has managed all matters as usual for me."

"You will find it rather dull," he remarked after a pause, marveling what could take a woman of the brilliant type of his companion to such a remote, quiet little place as Derlock. "There is only one other decent house in the place, besides my father's and yours."

"And to whom does that belong?"

"To Doctor Willard."

"Ah! Is he married?"

"No; single. His two sisters keep house for him."

"And are they young and pleasant?"

"Ella is just eighteen, rather pretty in a countrified style. Miss Willard is over thirty, and is—ah! well in fact a ——"

"Sort of dragon," put in the Russian archly, with a smile sweet enough to disarm even that monster.

"She is decidedly acidulated," laughed Lovelace.

"Then I shall avoid the doctor's house," remarked the lady.

"You won't have much difficulty in doing that," replied the young man, "as it is two miles from yours. The Manor—that is my father's place, you know—is a mile distant, lying between the two others, and if you want any more society, other than that of the country-folk, you will have to go ten mile to get it."

"How delightful!" she exclaimed with animation. "I shall enjoy the change and thorough quiet.

"Don't you think it may pall and grow monotonous after a time?"

"I think not. And you see, I must keep quiet and nurse myself through this winter."

"Why?" he inquired anxiously, scanning the beautiful face that showed every sign of perfect and splendid health.

"My lungs are weak," touching her breast; "the rigors of Russian winters have tried them terribly, and my physician recommends my passing the rest of the winter in South Devon."

"I see," he rejoined.

"Is it really warm there?"

"Yes, and Derlock is a sheltered cosy little spot."

"I am so glad you speak well of it," she remarked, as though much pleased. "Of course you know it so well. I suppose you have spent all your life there?"

He did not notice how eagerly and keenly the beautiful eyes searched his face as she asked the question.

"Not more than half. Before my father became an invalid we had a house in town, where we used to spend a portion of every year. Then I went to Eton and afterwards to Oxford, and have had chambers in Piccadilly for the last year," he explained, and then gradually she drew him on to tell her everything about his life and prospects.

The time passed so rapidly and pleasantly that he was astonished when the train slackened speed to hear the porters calling out the name of the station at which they had to alight for Derlock.

"You haven't told me your name?" she said with one of her brilliant smiles, as she rose and tossed aside the feather rug.

"Gilbert Lovelace; and yours? May I not know it?"

"I am Petrovna Dormanoff," she replied, giving him her hand to assist her from the carriage.

An elderly woman hurried down the platform to her as she alighted, and two men-servants appeared, and when the luggage had been collected, Gilbert escorted her to the carriage that was waiting, and stood bareheaded while she drove off, after bestowing on him a winning smile and a wave of the hand. Then he mounted into the sober dog-cart sent for him, and taking the reins from the groom, let the gray have her head, and rattled away towards his home.

Derlock Manor House was a fine old red brick building, of the Tudor fashion, many-windowed, turreted, with towers east and west, and had a commanding central porch, over which stood a clock tower. Round three sides of the house ran a broad marble terrace, with low open wall, and beyond lay the garden and park-like grounds and the great tree-covered hills.

It had been in the possession of the Lovelaces since the time of Elizabeth, and they were naturally proud of their old ancestral house and their stainless pedigree.

Gilbert's father had been in the House of Commons, and gave promise of becoming a fine orator and a light in the political world, but ill-health cut short his career, and obliged him to retire to the seclusion and quiet of his lovely Devonshire home. Then it was that he turned his thoughts exclusively to the future of his only child, striving his hardest to instill his own ideas and ambitions into the young mind.

However, he found the task a difficult one, for Gilbert's tastes were not similar to his father's. He did not care for politics, had no wish to shine in the House, and would have preferred living the simple life of a country gentleman, passing his time in shooting, fishing, and hunting; still, he yielded to his father's wishes, went to Oxford, took an expensive suite of rooms in town, and waited till he should receive orders to proceed to some embassy abroad.

The young man chafed somewhat at being kept in London, hanging about doing little or nothing, and responded eagerly to his father's summons, thinking he would have some definite news to tell him, but he was only mysteriously reticent; told him something good was in store if he would only wait patiently; and that he might as well remain at the Manor for the present.

This he was nothing loath to do, for he was consumed with a burning desire to once more see the Russian princess.

He had hinted a desire to call, but was met with a laughing refusal, and told her only chaperon was an old Polish woman, her foster nurse; so he had to trust to chance, and took to long walks through the valleys, and rides from east to west and north to south about Derlock and its vicinity.

But for a fortnight he only saw her once, and then she was driving a pair of roans, and flashed by swiftly, he just catching a bewildering glimpse of her beautiful face, wreathed in smiles of recognition.

A week later he met her on the beach at Mordoe, a tiny hamlet, some two or three miles further down the valley; met her walking alone, save for Ivan, who stalked majestically behind her.

"Ah, Mr. Lovelace, this is a pleasure," she exclaimed, as if delighted; her eyes shining, her lips smiling, as she stretched out her hand.

"The pleasure is mutual, princess," replied the young man, grasping her fingers warmly. "I thought we never should meet again."

"Ah, that was hardly possible."

"Would you permit me to call on you?" he asked.

"Better—not," she returned hesitatingly, a blush tinging the pure pallor of her cheeks. "When a woman is alone, as I am, she has to be so careful, or she becomes an object for pitiless tongues to canvass and traduce."

"There are so few people about here to criticize what you do."

"There is the doctor and his family," watching him closely through her thick lashes.

"Pshaw! Mere country bumpkins. You need not care what people of that sort think or say."

"Then—they have been talking of me?" she said, looking straight at him.

"Princess, what makes you think so?" he replied in some confusion.

"You have been there, have you not?" laying her hand gently on his arm, at which an electric shock seemed to run through him.

"Yes, I have been there," he acknowledged somewhat huskily.

"And they talked of me?"

"Yes."

"What did they say?"

"Oh, nothing."

"I know what that means. They abused me without limit and without reason, and ——"

"I should not allow anyone to abuse you when I was present," he said decidedly, looking at her with admiring eyes.

"Ah, have I partisan, a friend in you?" she asked softly.

"Yes, if you will permit me that privilege?" he returned eagerly.

"It would be a great happiness to me to have a friend, and yet—and yet——"

"Yet what?"

"Friendship between man and woman seldom answers one's hopes and expectations. One must always suffer and perchance weep."

"I am quite willing to run that risk," he cried.

"Then be my friend," she responded gently, putting her hand in his.

"Thanks," he murmured, as he pressed it tenderly, almost overcome by the flattering condescension of this regal and beautiful woman who exercised such a strange fascination over him.

"Now, tell me what you have been doing?" she said, as they paced slowly side by side along the pebbly beach, watching the great white-crested waves rush in with a dash, leaving a fringe of frothy foam on the strand, and the gulls riding on their crests, and the sand-pipers flitting and swooping by. "Since we last met, many things must have happened."

"Nothing of moment," he replied. "This is a quiet, humdrum spot, and is never convulsed nor wakened up by any fearful tragedy or startling event."

"I can believe that," she agreed, her haughty mouth curving into a little sneer; "but have you no news from other parts?"

"None. Absolutely none."

"Nothing fresh about the diplomatic career you told me you would soon be launched on?"

"Nothing at present."

"Still you may hear any day that you are attached to some embassy," she continued, with curious insistence.

"Of course," he assented. "Every morn-

ing as I see father perusing the pile of letters on his plate, I expect to hear that I am to set off at once for Kamtschatka, Nova Scotia, or some such horrible hole."

"I hope you won't go quite so far," observed the princess, with one of those brilliant smiles that lit up and softened her haughty face so wonderfully.

"I hope so too."

"You don't seem to like the idea of going abroad much," she went on, watching him furtively as usual through the shelter of her lashes.

"No, I would much rather stay here," he replied pointedly, and she turned away her head as though to hide a blush, but in reality her face grew paler and an angry light gleamed in her eyes. However, the next moment she recovered herself, and went on chatting graciously.

"You are young, you have your life and the world before you. Who knows? Some day you may be a great man, and famous."

"I think not," he replied, with a light laugh. "I believe I am a thorough fool in all things diplomatic, and should get on much better as a country squire than as a prime minister."

"You do not over-value your mental qualities."

"It would be difficult to do that," he admitted frankly, "for I know I have little or no talent, for diplomacy and finesse."

"Talent, and taste for it, may come with practice."

"I hardly think so. I am sure, princess, you could surpass me in that way easily."

"Do you think so?" she queried, a strange eagerness in her tones.

"I am sure of it. I should not care to cross swords with you in that way."

"Really! Now do you know that I do not care for very clever men? They seem to eclipse and overshadow we poor women. I rather like stupid ones."

"Then you ought to like me, princess," declared the young man boldly, and his companion laughed, though across her face swept a look of mingled anger and surprise.

However, Gilbert did not notice it, and they went on talking, and before they parted, in the gathering gloom of the winter's afternoon, he had obtained permission to call at the Valley House the next evening.

He never quite knew how he passed the early hours of the following day.

The hours seemed to drag along leaden-footed. He was restless, feverish, excited, and scarcely eat three mouthfuls of bread at dinner, a proceeding which awakened his fond mother's maternal fears, and inquiries as to the cause of this want of appetite.

Gilbert, however, parried her queries, and preserved a discreet silence anent Princess Dormanoff, for he was well aware his mother entertained a holy horror of all foreigners looking upon them with suspicious eyes.

At last, when dinner was over, and the invalid had retired to his room for the night, and Mrs. Lovelace had settled down comfortably to a game of cribbage with her companion, he was free, and throwing a coat over his dress suit and catching up a hat, he sped off at a great rate down the road leading to the Valley House. He was not long in traversing that mile, and his eager gaze scanned the place that held his divinity.

The garden was neglected, and showed that little or no effort had been made to put it straight.

Within all was different, and signs of elegance and luxuriance met his gaze on every side as he followed the tall footman who ushered him into the drawing-room. It was vacant, and he had time to glance about it.

It was rich in ornaments and bric-a-brac. There were bronzes from Szatnagal, china from Odessa, marble from Finland, bear-skins from the Arctic Seas, queer figures made in the forests of the north, and furs without end strewn over the floor and on the satin couches.

He sank on to a couch and felt there were worse things on a chilly evening than lying back luxuriously on a bear-skin; but just as he sank back he became conscious that a tall, black-robed figure was being reflected in the long mirrors that lined the walls from ceiling to floor, and starting up he saw the princess coming slowly towards him.

She wore a long trailing robe of dead-black silk, profusely trimmed with jet, which left her arms and throat bare, save for the string of pearls twisted round them, and that were not whiter than the skin against which they rested.

If she had appeared beautiful before, how much more so did she now to the infatuated young man, with her magnificent hair uncovered and her eyes unshaded by hat or cap.

Gilbert was absolutely dazzled by her loveliness, and as she came towards him smiling, with outstretched hands, his senses seemed to reel, and he felt for a moment that he was dreaming, and that this beautiful vision would fade from before his eyes.

She seated herself beside him and began telling him how pleased she was to see him.

"I thought you had changed your mind and did not mean to come."

"Why?" he inquired, striving to steady his brain, which still seemed in a state of chaotic disorder.

"You are half-an-hour late," glancing at a little gold clock on the mantel-shelf. "As a rule, my guests are punctual."

"Yes, I suppose so, when they are given the privilege of calling on you; but I really could not help myself to-night. My father, as you know, is an invalid, and he makes claims on my time and attention that I cannot ignore."

"Of course not," she assented gently, toying with a splendid ostrich feather fan, mounted in ebony.

"He detained me to-night, but to-morrow, or the next time you permit me to call on you, I shall be punctual to the minute."

"On the score of that promise you are forgiven, and you shall come and see me whenever you like."

"Princess! do you really mean that?" he cried, almost wild with delight, for he was little more than a boy, just twenty-two, and he was intoxicated by the subtle charm of the Russian beauty.

"Yes. I have so few friends, I shall be glad to add you to the number."

"And I shall be only too proud to be of them, though I feel you are wrong when you say they are few. I am sure I shall be only one in a multitude."

"It is you who are wrong," she replied softly, while a look of deep melancholy spread over her beautiful face. "I have had acquaintances by the score, but few friends. We Russians are so trammelled. We have to be careful even in the selection of our friends. We don't really know the true meaning of the word freedom."

"So I have heard," replied Gilbert, looking at her with interest. "I suppose we English understand it better than any other nation."

"I suppose so, unless it be the Americans."

"Ah, they are free, without any mistake," he laughed.

"I wish I could say the same of my unfortunate country people. But we are all slaves. There are such hideous possibilities for some of us; and for a moment her face grew very white, and her dilated eyes gazed straight before her, as though fascinated by some horror; but recovering herself she went on, "Englishwomen are so happy in being able to marry as they choose."

"And cannot Russians?" asked Gilbert impressively.

"Very few. We cannot follow the dictates of our hearts; we marry from policy, or passion, or convenience, seldom for love. Sometimes it is to save a father from the mines, sometimes a mother from a weary imprisonment, sometimes a brother from the assassin's knife."

"But you—you will not have to do that," exclaimed the infatuated young man, catching her hand between his in his eagerness.

"No," she replied, in slow sweet tones, letting her hand remain in his, and turning her magnificent eyes on him; "happily I am in England, and can follow the promptings of my own heart, however foolish they may be."

And as she spoke these encouraging words Gilbert felt his hand gently pressed by hers.

"Princess," he cried, carried away by his feelings, and losing his head altogether, for was it not evident this peerless creature had a tenderness for him, "dare I, may I hope? May I speak, and tell you something of what is in my heart?"

"It is too soon to speak," she returned gently. "We hardly know anything of each other yet, but you may—hope."

"Thanks," he exclaimed, kissing her hands again and again, so deeply moved that he did not see the strange look of disgust and repugnance that overspread her fair face.

After that it was all over with Gilbert Lovelace. Day by day he grew more infatuated with Petrovna Dormanoff, more her adorer, more her slave. She was the star, and he was the poor moth striving to singe its frail wings.

His heart was engaged to a certain extent, not quite so much, however, as he thought, but his vanity was deeply impressed and engaged, and he told himself over and over again that there was some fascination about him which she had discovered and fallen in love with.

He told himself this so often that at last one night he summoned courage and begged her to consent to become his wife, and somewhat to his astonishment she did not consent. But at the same time she made conditions, against which he found it useless to protest.

Absolute secrecy was one. Not a creature was to be told of their engagement. There was to be no thought of marriage until he had been appointed attache, and then the marriage was to take place quite privately, and they were to start for the continent directly afterwards.

To all this the poor deluded youth agreed, for the very simple reason that he found it useless to object. His lovely and charming princess had a will ten times as strong and determined as his own, and as usual the victory went to the strong.

Moreover, she kept him at a distance, cleverly, and in such a way that he hardly noticed it. Yet had he not been so bewitched he must inevitably have noticed that he had few if any of the privileges of an affianced lover.

He was never permitted to kiss anything save her hands, his head had never rested against that marble shoulder on which he wished to pillow it; his arm had never encircled that lithe waist in all their long interviews.

He was fire, but she was ice, and somehow or other the ice never melted in the heat, retaining always its cool hardness. Even under his rhapsodies, under the torrent of his vows and protestations of undying love and adoration, she remained calmly unmoved.

The beating of her heart did not quicken by a pulse, nor her eyelids droop, nor her hands quiver, and yet she managed by encouraging words and superb finesse to impress him with the idea that she was very fond of him; and his vanity made him fall into the trap baited with flattery.

So matters went on until April arrived with her robe of vernal green, jeweled with sweet wild blossoms, and Mr. and Mrs. Lovelace knew nothing of the entanglement into which their son had got himself, while he grew daily more restless, more anxious that his appointment should arrive.

It came at last, and to his delight he was ordered to start for St. Petersburg in less than a fortnight.

Without loss of time he repaired to the Valley House, and found the princess in her drawing-room, pretending to be busy over a dainty piece of work, and he was so full of his news and his plans for the future that he did not notice how her eyes sparkled, nor mark the red hectic spot that glowed in either cheek, nor the state of suppressed excitement in which she was.

"We must arrange all our plans now," he said, seating himself beside her and taking her hand.

"Of course," she assented; and then they talked together for some two or three hours, and before he left her they had settled everything.

A week later Gilbert, after a tender adieu with Petrovna, at which he displayed quite as much emotion as would have been necessary was he leaving her for years instead of days, started for London, enriched by a heavy purse and his fond father and mother's blessings.

The first thing he did when he arrived at his rooms in Piccadilly was to dismiss his man-servant with a liberal douceur, and the old woman who acted as cook and housekeeper, and to engage a couple of new servants at enormous wages for the space of one week.

This done he set about settling up all his affairs, went to the Foreign Office for his passport and the papers that were necessary, then returning to his rooms, sat waiting impatiently for the princess to arrive.

She had promised to come to his rooms, actually to his rooms, and then they were to be married early the next morning. He expected her at eleven, but time wore on and it was midnight, and still she had not arrived. He was in a fever of impatience, could hardly contain or control his anxiety.

What could be the matter? Had an accident happened?

At last, just when he felt he could bear the tension and anxiety no longer, he heard the sound of wheels stopping before the house, and tearing down the stairs, he was just in time to see the princess alighting from a cab, followed by the old Pole, as the first rosy glow of light heralded the coming dawn in the eastern sky.

"Have you been anxious, mon ami?" she asked softly, giving him both her hands.

"Anxious! I have been nearly mad!" he cried, crushing her hand in his strong grasp till she nearly shrieked with pain. "What was it? Is anything wrong?"

"Nothing, dear Gilbert. The train was detained, that was all."

"All! And I have been nearly mad."

"Poor boy! how you love me," she murmured; and for a moment her eyes rested on him with a queer look of regret in their brilliant depths.

"I worship you," he replied quietly. "But come, you must be famished," and he led the way upstairs to his dining-room, where supper was laid; and while Petrovna trifled with some chicken, she questioned him closely and curiously as to his visit to the Foreign Office and all matters connected with the journey, learning that he had engaged a saloon carriage in the Dover express that left Charing Cross between eight and nine at night, and made all arrangements to go at that time.

When she had learnt all she wanted to know, she became rather silent and thoughtful, and resisted all his importunities that she should go and lie down, declaring that she should remain in the salon with Surchen, the old Polish woman, who, to Gilbert's indignation, had remained sitting bolt upright on a chair like a wooden figure, apparently deaf and blind to all that was passing, still an insurmountable obstacle to that love-making in which the foolish young man would have wished to indulge.

"Do you like my dress," inquired the princess, touching the folds of a gray cashmere she wore, as she rose from the table, that the strange servants had loaded liberally with dainties.

"It is charming, like everything you wear. Are you going to be married in it?"

"Yes."

"What a splendid cross," touching a cross of brilliants hanging round her neck by a gray ribbon. "Is it the only ornament you mean to wear?"

"Yes; except a ring that matches it. Oh, by the way, dear Gilbert, this ring Paulo left at a jeweler's in Regent Street. I am loath to lose it; and as it may be long before either of us return to this country, will you, like the dear boy you are, go and fetch it for me?"

"Of course, dearest, I will; but there is plenty of time yet."

"Perhaps; but I want you with me for at least an hour before we drive to the church. I may be nervous," leaning over the back of his chair and placing her hand on his arm with a caressing gesture, utterly unlike her usual cold way, but glancing at the clock uneasily as she spoke, for the hands showed it was twenty minutes to nine.

"Besides, I must have a bouquet," she went on hurriedly; "will you get me the prettiest one you can?"

"Your word is my law," he rejoined gaily, kissing the hand that lay on his arm; "and though it grieves me to leave you for even an hour, I go at your bidding," and taking up his hat, he went out.

The princess watched him from the window, and waved her hands gracefully as he looked up; but the moment he was out of sight a change came over her. The smiles died away, the mouth became firm and resolute, the eyes glowed with the fire of determination.

"Quick, Surchen, lock the door! she exclaimed imperiously. "We must hurry—remember we have barely an hour. The Folkestone tidal train starts at 9.40. We are lost if we miss that;" and hastily tearing open a parcel the Pole held, she drew out a fair, curly wig, similar in color to Gilbert's fair locks, and while her companion secured the doors, dashed into Lovelace's bedroom, and began speedily to divest herself of her gray gown and feminine apparel.

About an hour later, Gilbert returned to his rooms, the great blazing diamond on his finger, and a costly bouquet in his hand.

He expected to find the princess where he left her, and surprised at not doing so, he went at once to his bedroom. An exclamation escaped his lips, for here all was confusion.

His clothes were strewn about, and shirts, collars, gloves, boots and ties were scattered about higgledy-piggledy, while his largest portmanteau lay open and empty hard by. With a foreboding at his heart he tore at the bell.

"Where is Madame Petrovna?" he asked the servant who appeared.

"The lady has gone, sir," replied the man.

"Gone! What do you mean?" he gasped.

"I don't know, sir," responded James, who was slightly mystified by the whole proceeding. "I haven't seen the lady since you went out; but the old woman said I was to give you this," handing him a letter and then discreetly retiring.

For a moment he gazed at it speechlessly, and then tore it open with trembling hands.

"MON AMI:

"Will you ever forgive me? I have not only stolen your heart, but a suit of your clothes as well, and your passport, and papers. We are nearly the same height, and with a fair wig I shall pass very well for Mr. Gilbert Lovelace, and reach Russia, from which country I have been most unjustly exiled; and what is more, at St. Petersburg I shall meet and be united to Ivan, my Ivan, whom I love and adore even as you love me. Forgive me, and forget me; and accept my deepest gratitude and sincerest thanks for the help you have all unwittingly given me to regain my own country and my lover's society. Please keep the ring as a souvenir of

"Your grateful friend,

"PETROVNA DORMANOFF."

* * * * *

Mr. Lovelace, junior, had a severe attack of brain fever that laid him low for many a long week; and Mr. Lovelace, senior, had enough to do in using his influence in high quarters to hush up the little Russian scandal; but when Gilbert recovered his senses and his health, no one said anything more about a diplomatic career for him.

He went to Devonshire and settled down as a hog-breeding, sheep-rearing Devon squire; and after some six or seven years married pretty Ella Wilford, the doctor's sister, to his mother's great delight, and made a good husband, and seemed quite content with his rustic, commonplace wife. All the same for that, though, he never quite forgot Princess Dormanoff, nor that episode in his otherwise dull and highly respectable life.

Nobody Wanted It.

BY MINNIE DOUGLAS.

NOBODY wanted that baby.

The father had realized an enormous fortune in trade, had taken up politics, and his judicious handling of the last had resulted in a peerage. He was getting on in life, when he ceased to be plain Mr. Benson and bloomed forth as Lord Terrick of Terrick Park, and various other holdings.

Although he had not infrequently harangued the working people on the luxuries and large tracts of land possessed by a bloated aristocracy, no one knew better than himself the dignity conferred by landed property.

He therefore said one thing and did another, as many have done before and since his time. He retained a partnership in the nail manufactory, and made a very successful hit at the head of the right nail when he resolved upon marrying, and marrying a lady. He was fully aware that the agreeable title of "my lord," which surrounded his footsteps with a gentle murmur, was slightly incongruous when applied to himself, and he determined to marry a woman to whom "my lady" was a natural adjunct.

No difficulty about this, everyone knows. The Earl of Ballywally had seven daughters and an encumbered estate. How he greeted the noble nail manufacturer, and invited him to fish for salmon in the Ballywally waters; how the new peer surveyed the seven daughters and finally decl-

ded on the youngest, Lady Flora; how Lady Flora, being eighteen, and in love with a penniless soldier of five and twenty, tried to show him that any of her sisters were better fitted for the post of Lady Terrick than she was—these are matters well known. Also the grand wedding, and the welcome home from the Terrick tenantry, and the pale, sweet smiles of the young bride.

A year after there was great expectation. Bonfires were built ready for lighting, the ringers hung about the Terrick Arms waiting their orders, and inside the great house people walked silently and whispered anxiously. At last the old woman who had come from Ireland to nurse the Lady Flora (she had been the darling of her nursery) crept down the great staircase to the library, her heart misgiving her, but a bold front to it all.

"Praise God, yer honor—your lordship has a beautiful child."

Up started the father, a flush on his elderly face.

"A boy?" he cried.

"Nay, yer honor, not this time. It's the finest girl in the world though."

Down in his chair sat Lord Terrick, angrily glowering at the fire. After a minute's silence, the old nurse spoke, and there was anger in her voice.

"I'll be going back to your lady, my lord. Is there anything to say from your honor?"

"Eh?" he started. "Yes, of course. Very glad it is over. Hope she will soon re——"

Before he finished, nurse was out of the room with a bang, commenting audibly, to the scandal of the servants in the hall, "as hard as his own nails!"

I said nobody wanted that baby, but I was wrong, for the touch of its velvet cheek was the first ray of happiness in the married life of poor Lady Flora. And to last such a little while! For before the argument had fairly been commenced as to the propriety of ringing bells or lighting bonfires, the mother's tired spirit found rest, and the smile on her dead face was all for the tiny girl she left behind.

Lord Terrick never willingly saw the child, and when he did he sighed heavily. He considered his life ruined by the fact that his title would die with him. When the child was a year old, however, and certain matrons were spreading their toils to provide a solace for the widowed nobleman; and when he had sent for the little girl and heaved a deeper sigh than usual over her unconscious head; Lord Terrick died—and snapping the difficult chain of events, left the Honorable Flora Benson heir-at-law to all he possessed.

Providentially this bereaved child fell into good hands, and received a sound and wholesome bringing up. The fact revealed itself early that she would have no beauty, and as she grew to girlhood her well cultured mind decided that her money would bring much pretended adoration to her feet, and that she would never have the happy consciousness of believing she was loved for herself.

When she was eighteen she confided some of her doubts to her aunt and chaperon, the Lady Margaret O'Kelly; and between reasoning and coaxing persuaded that good and affectionate woman to consent to a romantic plan she had formed.

"You see, Aunt Margaret, though my father was a peer, he was also a man of trade. While I live in state in Surrey, large sums of money are paid to my agents by the managers of the manufactory in Staffordshire. There is Ridwell Grange—two miles only from the works. My father lived there till a peerage and this estate were attained together."

"Well, my dear, and do you want to live at Ridwell Grange? It is your own."

"No—not just that," said Flora, hesitatingly.

"What then, child?" asked her aunt, laying down her knitting and adjusting her spectacles.

"You see, aunt, I want to get away from myself for a little."

"The saints preserve us!" cried the Lady Margaret, although she was a very staunch Protestant, and looked upon a priest as the direct and accredited messenger of the evil one. "What has turned your head?"

"Well, auntie, it's this. I'm very ugly, you know."

"Who said so?" inquired the elder lady, in a peppery tone.

Flora laughed outright.

"My looking-glass. No one else has ever suggested, or ever will suggest such a thing. But I have studied my short, plebeian nose, my little eyes, my mouth ——"

"Hold your tongue, child!" cried the Lady Margaret, aghast to find how well acquainted her niece was with her imperfections; and conscious, too, that she and her sisters had many times bewailed that Lady Flora's daughter had not one of her mother's features.

"Please, auntie, let me unfold my plan. Before the lovers of my money-bags begin to buzz about me, I want you to travel with me for a little."

"Travel, my dear?" doubtfully answered Lady Margaret. "I'm a sad coward about going across the water."

"There's no water to cross, Aunt Margaret. I just want to go to Staffordshire."

"Dear me! I asked you if you wanted to live at Ridwell, and you said no."

"I'm a tiresome, provoking, troublesome——"

"Have done, now, and tell me what you do want."

"It's just this. I want to find out what would happen to me if I were poor—I mean, with enough to live on, but not an heiress. I want to live near Ridwell Grange with you, and for nobody to know who we are—just for a few months, to see what the tenants are like and the nail-makers' homes."

"My dear, anybody but my doting self would say you were mad!"

"But you won't say it," whispered Flora.

And all that evening they sat like two conspirators arranging their plans with bated breath for leaving the luxurious home at Terrick, and setting up in a small furnished house with two servants, one to be taken with them, the other hired on the spot.

On a dark November evening about eight o'clock the train drew near the station, and Flora's eyes had been fixed with a sort of awe upon several flaming, smoking places—the only things visible in the darkness—where the ceaseless work of the iron-trade was carried on.

She fell into a reverie, wondering how many of the human beings were working for her, and was roused by her aunt saying:

"I wonder if the carriage——"

"Auntie, we must take a fly, you know," said Flora, deprecatingly. Luckily they were alone, but for their elderly maid, who most unwillingly connived at this demeaning of her ladies. "You are Miss O'Moore, and I am your niece of the same name. We have a modest little income out of which we are going to do as much good as we can."

Lady Margaret repressed a groan.

"And I'll be calling your ladyship 'my lady' as sure as my name's Martin!" mournfully responded the maid.

"Get a fly, please, and if all the luggage won't go on it, send the rest up to Miss O'Moore, Acacia Cottage. Here's the full address."

It was Flora who undertook all the arrangements, and they were soon landed at the neat little furnished villa they had engaged just outside the town. A tidy Staffordshire woman opened the door, and cosy fires burned in the two little sitting-rooms. Lady Margaret looked round the drawing-room, and across the tiny slip of passage, and muttered:

"Like a doll's house!"

"Yes," said Flora, quickly; "so neat and tidy."

After a few days things began to settle down, and Flora made the acquaintance of a working clergyman's equally energetic wife. This lady pronounced the party at Acacia Cottage to be evidently quite respectable, and the girl intelligent and inclined to be useful. She also remarked how very plain she was. Her husband agreed with her, but softened the observation by a well-known proverb—"Handsome is," etc.

Flora gained her object, and became acquainted with the nail-makers. She went over her own works under the condescending guidance of a very vulgar manager to whom a large salary was paid. She appeared to be examining nails, but was really occupied in studying the beings who made them. Very grimy, very stolid in most cases, not much imagination being fostered by their work or surroundings.

Some looked thin and ill, many of the young workers especially. Flora found out the wages paid to each, and the manager said they were asking an increase, but wouldn't get it.

"What if they strike?" asked Flora.

"They know better. If they did I'd replace them by other men."

It was getting very cold weather now. Flora went to some of the homes. Wretched, dark and damp, in many cases squalid. She had hard work to gain admittance sometimes, and despaired of reaching the people in her assumed character.

At times she found it a relief to wander near Ridwell Grange, and was glad to find the place let and well cared for. There were nice cottages near it, and resting in one after a long walk, Flora met another visitor who knocked and entered cheerily—all the children running forward to meet him. He began fumbling in his pockets for apples, and then as he offered them, caught sight of Flora. The woman said:

"It's Miss O'Moore, sir; a young lady from the town. She does a deal of good among the nail-makers."

Flora colored brightly, but before she could disclaim the gentleman said:

"They need friends, ignorant and downtrodden as some are, and puffed with discontent and arrogance the rest. I hear a good deal, for I rent my house from the agent of one of the big firms."

Flora said she had seen some trouble in her short acquaintance with people, and then telling the woman she must hasten home she left.

The early shadows of a dull, frosty December day were falling, and she walked quickly, as there were two miles of lonely road to travel. Suddenly from a hedgerow, a wild-looking, dirty man stepped before her. Flora tried to move aside, but the man held out both hands, saying

"I'm starving. You looks well-fed enough! Give me money, or it'll be the worse for you."

The girl turned pale, but resolute.

"I have no money—let me pass."

"You've got a watch if you have no money," said the man, "and I'll 'ave it."

His dirty hand just clasped her delicate wrist; she shrieked for help, though fearing none was near; then a man's figure, followed by a huge dog, leapt the hedge, and the dog seized the beggar by the shoulder. The wretch let Flora's hand drop with a howl of pain, and the girl felt a dazed darkness surrounding her, and became unconscious.

* * * * * * *

"My love," said Lady Margaret O'Kelly, "I think our little farce should be ended. We promised to return to Terrick for Christmas, and there is only a fortnight left."

Flora was looking meditatively across the prim little front garden at the milkman's cart.

"You have done all you can for the poor people. I am sure the good vicar and that very gentlemanly man who has Ridwell Grange speak most highly of the good you have worked," pursued her aunt. "And the Grange itself could not be in better hands than Mr. Barrington's—unless you lived there yourself."

"Quite true, auntie," said Flora, turning towards her. "You have been very patient and good to stay so long. I am only sorry to leave my quiet, busy life for all the humbug I shall have to endure."

Lady Margaret looked keenly at her niece.

"You would not be a coward, my dear?"

"No; I don't think so, at least. Dear me, there's the door-bell, and Hannah is just bringing our cosy tea! Some old gossip from the villas I daresay—you are good-natured to them, auntie!"

But the visitor wore man's attire, and was Mr. Barrington. He came, he said, to ask Miss O'Moore's advice as to some Christmas festivities for the poor, and would her niece do him the kindness to help him?

"I feel great sympathy in your work, Mr. Barrington, but my niece and I are leaving almost directly."

Mr. Barrington looked up quickly, and met Flora's eyes.

"For Christmas?" he asked in a very low voice.

"Altogether," said Flora quietly. "My aunt and I only intended a short stay here."

Mr. Barrington became wonderfully silent and distrait, and drank his tea in an absent manner; breaking in upon some conversation with the inquiry:

"When do you leave?"

"In four days," said Lady Margaret. "Pray have some more toast."

Flora left the room to send off some letters, and Mr. Barrington said hastily to her aunt:

"Miss O'Moore, may I see you alone this evening, if I call?"

"Certainly," said Lady Margaret, and a curious smile flitted over her face when he was gone. She mused, "I thought something would come of that day when he rescued her from the beggar—such trifles life hangs on! Dear me, what a tale I have to tell!"

I need scarcely say Mr. Barrington proposed to Flora. Her aunt revealed nothing until she had sent the girl to give her own happy answer.

Then with a great rustle of silk, and unnecessary rattling of door handle, Lady Margaret intruded.

"We have a mystery to explain, Mr. Barrington."

He bowed and started confusedly at both ladies.

"I am not Miss O'Moore, and that is not my niece's name."

A bewildered expression gathered on the lover's face and he reached out his hand to make sure Flora still stood near.

"In truth, Mr. Barrington, you are Flora's tenant, as she is Miss Benson, of Terrick Park, and I am her aunt, Lady Margaret O'Kelly."

There was blank silence for some seconds.

"Will you forgive me?" asked Flora shyly.

"My darling! if with all these crushing advantages you still can take me, what have I to forgive? At least, you know I loved you for yourself."

"We are so glad of that," interposed Lady Margaret, hastily brushing a tear from her eye. "Flora has been as my own child might have been, and it would have been a sore thing to see her married for her fortune."

Both Terrick Park and Ridwell Grange saw great rejoicings early in the year, and some of the grimy folk in Staffordshire profited by a marriage which brought the owner of the works and her husband many months of the year amongst them.

WHEN ECONOMY BECOMES POVERTY.—"Economy is wealth," saith the proverb, and yet in some cases, where people carry it to an extreme, economy becomes poverty.

The man who denies himself every comfort and pleasure, for the sake of saving a few dollars, is no better off than the bankrupt who has enjoyed life and spent his last coin like a king, or the pauper who has never known what wealth means. Human nature is prone to extremes.

When any one gets into the way of thinking and saying they cannot afford to take a pleasure trip, or they cannot afford to buy this, that, and the other thing, they find the feeling growing upon them, and they become a slave to the idea of self-denial and economy.

Extravagance is as great an evil as penury, and brings calamity, not only upon the spendthrift, but upon his family and business associates; but when an individual becomes a monomaniac upon the subject of saving the pennies and counting the cost of every trifling need or luxury of life, he makes himself and friends as thoroughly wretched as though the pockets were empty and the check-book a hollow mockery.

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

The number of men to-day ready for duty upon the Continent may be stated to be in round figures as follows: Germany, 3,000,000; France, 5,710,000; Russia, 6,675,000, Italy, 3,260,000; Austria, 4,350,000. This makes a total of 23,130,000. If the present alliances should hold good in the event of war, Germany, Italy and Austria could call out 13,745,000 men again 12,385,000 men from France and Russia.

The census of 1890 will reveal many wonderful changes. The central line of population will be much nearer the Mississippi river than it was ten years ago. A series maps like those contained in the last census, of gradations in color, to indicate the changes in density of population, wealth, health and other important facts, will present a curious contrast with the maps that we now have for the census of 1880, or 1870. Over 16,000,000 acres of land were sold in the last fiscal year under the operation of the Homestead and Timber Culture law. More than 125,000,000 acres have been settled in the last eight years, representing a larger area than the States of Indiana, Illinois, Ohio and Michigan.

From statistics recently published in that country it would appear that murders are committed in Italy three times oftener than in Austria, four times oftener than in Prussia, five times oftener than in Sweden, fourteen times oftener than in Denmark and sixteen times oftener than in Britain. Crime has also unfortunately been increasing instead of decreasing in Italy of late years. Of the foreign countries sharing favorably in a comparison of the criminal classes with the population may be mentioned:—Russia, where they number 13 in each 10,000; Portugal, 16 per 10,000; Norway, 15 per 10,000; while Sweden appears to be a very law-abiding country, the persons convicted in 1885 being only 4 per 10,000 of the population.

Dhuleep Singh, the Indian Prince, has demanded of Queen Victoria the restoration of the famous Kohinoor. The prince has been for some time held as a hostage in England, but has escaped at last. The letter is said to have been something as follows: "It will be useless for me to demand the restoration of my kingdom, swindled from me by your Christian government, but which I hope shortly, by the aid of Providence, to retake from my robbers. But my diamond, the Kohinoor, I understand, is entirely at your own personal disposal. Therefore, believing your Majesty to be 'the most religious lady' that your subjects pray for every Sunday, I do not hesitate to ask that this gem be restored to me, or else that a fair price be paid for it to me out of your privy purse."

Men generally wear their scarfpins in their neckties, but California boasts of a man who has carried such an article of jewelry in his throat. When pulling a tramp off the cars at Madeira, Fresno county, in April last, Daniel Anseon, a brakeman, was shot in the neck by a tramp. The wounded brakeman was sent to the railroad hospital at Oakland, where the bullet was extracted. He was discharged as cured three weeks ago. The man, however, always felt an unpleasant sensation in his throat. Thursday he returned to the hospital for relief. The doctor reopened the wound and found therein a section of the silk necktie worn by Anseon at the time of the shooting and fragments of his scarfpin. These were removed, and it is expected that in a few days the man will be twisting brakes again.

A curious story has been afloat in London. It appears that at a certain party a lady lost a diamond earring of great value, which could nowhere be found. Thereupon a gentleman who had just returned from the East professed his capability to discover the missing gem by means of an Indian drug. Accordingly he asked all the company to be seated, and presently, after leaving the room, he reappeared with a colored glass bowl containing a liquid. He then announced that he should ask all those present to dip their fingers into the vessel, and declared that should anyone have secreted the jewel for a joke, the jester's hand would be tinged with a rich blood-red. After the ordeal was gone through every one's digits came out perfectly white, but the earring was found at the bottom of the bowl. The professor was, of course, above suspicion in the matter of conjuring.

There has just died at Patterdale, in Westmoreland, Eng., a clergyman of the name of Matheson, aged ninety, and who had been an incumbent of that parish for the long period of sixty years. During the early part of his life his benefice brought him only £12 or about $60 a year, but this was afterwards increased to £18 or about $90 a year, which it never exceeded. On this he married, brought up four children, and lived comfortably with his neighbors; educated a son at the University and left $8,000 behind him. With that singular simplicity and attention to form which characterizes a country life, he himself read the burial service of his mother, he married his father to a second wife, and afterwards buried him also; he published his own banns of marriage in his church with a woman whom he had previously christened, and he himself solemnized the marriage of all his children.

Our Young Folks.

HIS BIRTHDAY.

BY M. BROWNE.

IT was on the first of April, and anyone who has ever lived in a house full of children knows what that means. It means fun, laughing, shouting, noise, absolute riot, until twelve o'clock, and then once more peace returns to the land.

Everyone, from father to Bob, the boy who cleaned the boots, everyone at Eversley had been caught in one way or other. Everyone did I say? no there was one exception. I should have said everyone but Lionel.

Lionel, who had made all the plans—Lionel, who had helped to catch everyone else—Lionel had been so careful, so watchful, that none had been able to make him slip, none had had the joy of reminding him that it was the first of April.

You may be sure that they had tried, and tried very hard too; but when the clock struck eleven Lionel was still triumphant.

Nevertheless, he did not escape, and to everyone's surprise, it was his small sister Susie who managed to catch him at last.

She had been out for a walk in the village, and came running into the nursery where Lionel was sitting reading.

"Leo," she cried, "come—come and see the big bear."

Lionel jumped up quickly, and then as quickly sat down again.

"The bear," he said, laughing. "I haven't forgotten that it is the 1st of April. Did Frank send you? Tell him I'm not to be caught!"

"But, Leo, there is a bear—do come!" said Susie earnestly.

Lionel hesitated. Could it be true? was there a bear?

He half rose, then once more remembering the date of the month, and how pleased the others would be if they could catch him, sat down again and took up his book.

"Take care he doesn't eat your Punch up. No, no, tell Frank that I'm not to be caught to-day."

Susie clasped her beloved Punch—a doll that had been given to her on her last birthday—tightly to her, kissed him, and then putting him into Lionel's arms, so that he should be quite safe, trotted out of the nursery.

Lionel looked at the doll thoughtfully, and then listened. He heard her run to the door, he heard voices, and then he heard Frank say—

"Won't he come? Won't he believe that there is a bear? Then he's an April fool, after all."

He ran quickly to the window and opened it, just in time to hear the village boys shouting, and to see a performing bear led out of the garden by its keeper.

Then he heard the children running upstairs, and knew that in a minute more he would be greeted with cries of, "There was a bear! It's the 1st of April!"

He was so disappointed at being caught, and so angry with Susie, that he determined to hide.

Quickly hastening out of the nursery, he ran into his mother's room, and jumped into the big cupboard.

He was so occupied in keeping quiet that he did not at first notice that he still held Susie's Punch in one hand. He quickly determined to hide the doll to punish his little sister for catching him.

Slipping out of his hiding-place he pushed poor Punch tightly into the corner of a small trunk, that was lying open on the floor; then he hastened out of the room, down the back staircase, and away out of doors.

When he returned home after a long walk, in time for half-past one dinner, April Day was past and gone, and he had then forgotten all about his anger and the doll.

* * * * * *

Far away from Eversley, in a small room in a small house in a small village in France, April Day had passed and gone too, but without frolic and fun.

There was only one child in this household, and he was not old enough to know anything about April Day, for he was not yet three years old.

Though he did not understand April Day, his mother had managed to make him understand that the 4th of April was a day for him to remember—that it was his birthday.

After she had tucked him up in his little bed she sat down in her tidy room to wait for her husband to come home, and began to think.

Her thoughts carried her away back home—to Eversley, to her old mistress and the children she had nursed.

Thinking of her boy's birthday on the morrow, she began to think of the happy birthdays she had seen at the big house, the number of presents that the children received, and she had not one for her darling, for she and her husband were very poor.

So deep was she in thought—so far away from her little home—that she did not notice that her husband had returned, did not see him place a trunk on the chair behind the door, and was astonished when she felt his kiss on her cheek.

So much astonished was she, that though she tried to greet him with her usual smile she could not quite manage it, and some of the sadness caused by her thoughts remained in her face.

"Why, Louise, little wife," exclaimed her husband, "what is the matter?"

"Nothing, Pierre; I was thinking of old times, and wishing I had some of the toys I have seen the children throw away at Eversley for my boy to-morrow. I would so have liked to have given him a present."

Pierre comforted her with a kiss, and then they talked and chatted of old times and present times, and at last went to bed, quite forgetting the trunk standing in the corner.

Next morning Louise was roused very early by her little son.

He was in excellent spirits, and seemed to think the day was quite his own, and kept his father busy playing with him and his mother kissing him.

"Now, Pierre, as it is his birthday, you shall see him in his bath."

Pierre was quite willing, and went to fetch the chair from behind the door. It was occupied by the trunk.

"Ah, Louise," he cried, "I forgot. Look this came last night. Shall I open it?"

"Yes, Pierre, do. I expect it is the dress I am to make for Madame Bonheur."

"Perhaps it is," said Pierre. "No, it can't be. Why, Louise, it is from England!"

Then he opened it, and pulled out first some stuff for a dress for Louise, then a toy lamb for the baby, and then, best of all, a kind note from Louise's old mistress at Eversley.

Louise's exclamations of joy were loud, and when the lamb appeared she jumped up and ran over to her husband with the baby.

Pierre held up the lamb to show the boy, but to his surprise the baby took no notice of it, and would have nothing to do with it.

He only pointed one fat little finger to the trunk, and kicked his little legs, trying to get down to it.

"Why, he doesn't seem to want the lamb," said Louise, quite disappointedly, "and I thought it would be a beautiful birthday present for him."

"What is he pointing at?" asked Pierre.

But Louise had seen the letter, and putting down the baby on the table she began to read it. Sue and Pierre were so interested that they did not notice the baby, and they were startled by hearing him give a cry of delight.

They turned round quickly, just in time to save him from rolling off the table. He was waving his arms, and kicking his legs with delight, and in his hands he held tightly—Susie's Punch.

"Where did he get it?" asked Louise.

"From the box," said Pierre. "He must have seen it when we showed him the lamb!"

"How kind of mistress to send two toys!" said Louise. "I will write and thank her."

"He seems to like this one," said Pierre.

And his father was right. Master Baby crowed and clapped his hands. Susie's Punch evidently pleased him very much. He could not be persuaded to give it up, not even to have his bath, and his father was obliged to dance it in front of him all the time he was being washed.

Louise wrote to thank her mistress, but Louise's letter has been a puzzle to the good people at Eversley from that day to this. After thanking them for the trunk and dress, she went to say how delighted her baby boy was with the "mister punch."

"Mister punch," said mamma, aloud, as she read the letter. "What does she mean?"

"Mister punch?" said everyone.

Then they all gave it up, and none ever guessed that Louise meant poor Susie's mysteriously lost Punch, which in this strange way had become a Frenchman.

ROSY CHEEKS AND LIGHT HEARTS.

BY JOHN W. KIRTON.

LITTLE Flory Baker was sitting one spring morning in the back parlor, looking out of the window which faced the garden belonging to her father, when all at once, she said:

"Oh, dear, I do wish it was summertime, so that I might go and sit out in the garden and smell the flowers. What a very long time it is coming, mamma, isn't it?"

"It will soon be here now, my dear," replied her mamma. "Only a few more weeks, and then we shall have Midsummer Day, with all its brightness and warmth, and by that time I hope you will be quite well again."

"So do I, mamma, for I am tired of hearing people say, 'How white you are, my dear,' and if I could get out into the sunshine, it would help to give my cheeks a rosy color again. Don't you think so, mamma?"

"Yes, my love. But you must not forget you have been very ill, and that it takes time to bring back again the rosy cheeks you have lost by your having to keep so long a time in the house. But I hope, from what the doctor says, you will soon be able to go out into the garden during the warm part of the day."

"I wish it was coming to-morrow, mamma, dear, for I am beginning to feel quite well again."

"I am glad to hear you say so, my love. But you must not forget that you have had a very serious attack, and the doctor says we must be careful not to let you run any risk of taking a chill, or it may throw you back."

"Oh, no, mamma," cried Flory, "I would rather wait until it is quite safe, rather than have to be shut up in my bedroom day after day as I have had to be during the last few weeks."

Just then the bell rang, and Mrs. Baker said—

"I shouldn't be surprised if that is not the doctor, and if so I will ask him what he thinks."

"Well, my little maid, and how are you this morning?" asked Dr. Price, as he entered the room. "I begin to think you will soon want to bid me cease calling to see you."

"Thank you, doctor," replied Flory. "I do feel much better again this morning; but I want to go out into the garden and smell the spring flowers. They do look so bright and gay."

"By all means go, my dear, and get a little air and sunshine during the bright and warm part of the day. It will be much better than being cooped up in the house all the time; but mind and do not sit about, but keep in the sunshine."

"Thank you so much. I will be sure and take every care," said Flory, as she skipped about the room at the prospect of making her first visit since her illness to the garden.

"Then go and ask nurse to put on your things; only tell her to wrap you up well, as the first time of your going out you will find it cool, although the sun is just now so nice and warm."

Away Flory ran, full of joy at the prospect of being so soon able to realize her wishes.

It was indeed a beautiful balmy morning. The birds filled the air with their sweet chirpings while the primroses and early spring flowers looked in all their best.

She had not gone up and down the garden more than once or twice before she felt tired, and glad to sit down in the sunshine on a seat near where the gardener was busy transplanting some flowers.

"Don't you get sometimes tired?" asked Flory, "being always at work in the garden."

"Only when the day's work is done, miss," replied Charles: "for you see I love the work so well that when I am sowing the little brown, black, or white seeds, I am looking forward to the time when I shall see the plants spring up, and their bright and beautiful flowers will bloom."

"How nice to think you will have such a rich reward for your work."

"It is, miss; and I sometimes think that if you had a little garden of your own, maybe you would enjoy it like I do, and it would bring you more flowers than you have ever dreamt of."

Flory opened her big blue eyes with surprise, as she asked:

"Why, what need is there, Charles, for me to have a little garden? I can have from this big garden more flowers than I can ever want."

"That's all very true, miss. But there is nothing like having one of your own to watch over and take care of. I could help you, and show you how to sow the seed and transplant some of those flowers. Then you could clear away the weeds and watch every day how each plant was getting on. It would bring two crops of flowers, if you would only try."

"Two crops in one summer, Charles. I never heard of such a thing."

"Never mind, miss, whether you have heard of it before or not; you try it, and see if I am not right. It will bring flowers in the garden and roses in your cheeks at the same time."

"Then I'll try, for I was saying to mamma this morning how tired I was of hearing our friends saying 'How white you are, my dear.' I will go and ask mamma what she thinks about it," said Flory, as, starting up, she went into the house.

"Do," said Charles to himself, "and people won't talk about white cheeks very long."

"Oh, mamma, what do you think?" said Flory, as she rushed into the parlor, her eyes full of brightness.

"I think your walk in the garden has done you a deal of good already, my dear."

"Yes, mamma, and more than you would think;" and she told her what the gardener had proposed, and asked whether it might be allowed, to which a ready assent was given.

So next morning the work was commenced, and ere many weeks had passed Charles's words had been fully confirmed.

Not only were the beds which Flory had sown and weeded with care and attention full of bright and sweet flowers, but the bloom had returned to the child's cheeks, and she looked the picture of health.

Besides bringing health to Flory, the gardener's cheerful words brought a greater benefit. While making up a nosegay one morning to decorate the little parlor, he said:

"It would be nice, miss, if you would allow me to make up a bunch or two to leave at the Children's Hospital as I go home to dinner. There's lots of poor children lying there who never see a flower from one year's end to the other; and it would help to cheer them up amid their pain and sorrow."

"Then I am sure you shall do it," replied Flory, "and I will go and ask mamma if she approves of your suggestion."

While Charles was gathering the flowers Flory went in search of her mamma, to whom she made known what she wished to do.

"But I will add one condition," said Mrs. Baker to her daughter. "That, as it is a very fine morning, you must have the flowers put into your little basket, and we will take them to the Hospital ourselves, and perhaps you will be allowed to look into one of the wards and see the children; and then you will be better able to understand the value of your kind gift to the dear little ones who are obliged to lie there in pain and sickness."

"I shall be delighted, mamma."

Flory had never seen the inside of such a place before, and great was her surprise, as she walked through the rooms in which the dear little suffering children lay in bed, to witness their white faces and sorrowful appearance.

One after another begged for a flower, and Flory was delighted as she noticed the joy with which they placed them where they could best be seen.

That morning was the beginning of a new life to Flory.

Many times during the summer she paid other visits with her mamma, and realized she was the means of throwing a gleam of sunshine into many a little child's mind, as she heard one after another exclaim—

"Bless you, miss—thanks for your kindness."

She felt tears of joy falling down her cheeks as she saw how easily she was able to impart so much happiness by such simple means; and as the summer passed away and the flowers faded, she felt abundantly rewarded for her daily work in her little garden.

It not only brought roses into her cheeks, but also carried brightness and gladness into the hearts of many dear little sick children who had never before been able to secure such bright and beautiful flowers.

A BATH-ROOM MYSTERY.—Not long ago there was great excitement on board one of the large passenger steamers coming from the East.

Day after day it was noticed that the bath-room door was locked for an hour or more. At first the passengers thought it was merely that someone had taken an extra time over the bath, and had left the room so quietly as not to be heard.

When days passed by, and the bath-room door was still safely locked at the same time, one of the passengers complained to the captain of the ship.

"Send for me the next time it happens," he replied.

Accordingly the following morning, when the door was tried in vain, the captain was summoned, as he desired.

He made his way to the bath-room, closely followed by a little crowd of ladies and gentlemen, all very anxious to see what was the bath-room mystery.

"Open the door at once," said he in his most authoritative voice.

No answer. Yet there was a slight noise on the other side of the door, which told that someone was there.

"Open the door. If you do not I will burst it open," came again from the commander, but more seriously this time.

Then slowly and softly the key was turned in the lock, the door opened, and the mystery was solved.

A little boy, the son of one of the lady passengers, had the bath full of water, and was happily floating his boats on the miniature ocean.

It had been his custom to amuse himself thus for many days, and he could not quite understand why the captain should make such a fuss.

SKILLED LABOR.—It appears that in Germany there is but slight disposition among manufacturers to provide themselves with skilled labor by training up apprentices. Various reasons are given for this; that the factories are not suited to apprentices; that the law makes restrictions respecting them which are not applied to mechanics' apprentices, such as prohibiting the employment of minors under sixteen years of age for more than ten hours a day in the factories, and that the apprentices do not want to serve their time fully out, and when they have acquired a trade leave those of whom they have learned it to go to some one else.

The regulations imposed by the German Government controlling the employment of apprentices in factories are very rigid.

Before taking any young person into his employ the manufacturer has to give the police notice in writing of his intention to do so, naming the factory, the day on which the young person is to commence work, the length of time he is to work and the pauses he is to enjoy, as well as the character of the work on which he is to be employed.

In every factory a list has to be posted in a conspicuous place of the young persons employed, with the commencement and termination of their periods of labor, and the pauses for rest to which they are entitled, as well as the regulations governing employment.

IT is no more possible for an idle man to keep together a certain stock of knowledge than it is possible to keep together a stock of ice exposed to the meridian sun. Every day destroys a fact, a relation, or an influence; and the only method of preserving the bulk and value of the pile is by constantly adding to it.

A WESTERN switch-tender, caught napping at his post, excuses himself by remarking that the safety of a railway greatly depends on the soundness of the sleepers; but the local jailor retorts that such sleepers are only safe when they're bolted in.

MY FRIENDS.

BY MINNIE A. SANDERSON.

I have sailor friends away,
Cruising o'er life's varied sea;
And I hope some future day,
They'll come sailing back to me.
Whereso'er they now may be
Sailing away.

One sails on the sea of gold,
O'er its bosom smooth and fair;
And his vessel, I've been told,
May ere long be stranded there.
He's a seaman stout and bold,
On the waters bright but cold,
Sailing away.

There's another sailor friend,
Shipman on a fairer sea;
From the tidings which he sends
One of Pleasure's boatmen he.
He's a sailor, gay and bright,
Basking in Joy's sunny light—
Sailing away.

And then there is a gallant boy
Flying o'er Love's magic sea,
And his song's a constant joy
As 'tis wafted unto me;
For his heart is true, I know,
No matter where the lad may go
Sailing away.

"THE ELIXIR OF YOUTH."

It was said in the Middle Ages that the Evil One gave to mortals a certain Elixir of Youth, on condition that he or she who received it should eventually become his prey. This elixir was supposed to confer perpetual youth on those who consumed it; age had no effect on them to dim the eye, to blanch the hair, to furrow the skin. Very seldom do we find these old myths without some foundation in fact, on which they were reared, or out of which, as a root, they threw up their fantastic outgrowth. It was so with the fabled Elixir of Youth. That elixir is still sold, still produces some of its fabled effects, and still brings with it a Nemesis.

That elixir is arsenic, a mineral that has a powerful effect on the blood and skin, and is therefore used as a medicine, but which is also a virulent poison. The ancients only knew it as orpiment; and Avicenna, in the eleventh century, is the first to speak of white arsenic, as well as its sublimate; and it is precisely at the time that arsenic began to be known, that the first rumors of the compact with the Evil One for the Elixir of Youth began to spread. It is well known that among horse-dealers arsenic is used to give plumpness and gloss to the beasts they desire to sell; but it is not as generally known that there are men and women who take arsenic habitually to improve their complexions and ward off the advance of age.

We generally suppose that the use of artificial methods of preserving or enhancing beauty is confined to the wealthy, but the eating of arsenic is most prevalent precisely where we should least expect to find it—among the hardy, lusty dwellers of the Alps.

Throughout the Tyrol there are to be found peasant-girls and men who secretly are addicted to this habit; but it is chiefly in Styria and Carinthia that arsenic-eating has become a habit.

In 1875 a congress of naturalists assembled at Gratz, in Styria, when the subject of arsenic eating came under discussion; and two men, whom public report affirmed to be inveterate arsenic-eaters, were brought before the congress to be examined. One came from Stainz, the other from Liegist; they were vigorous, well-built men, and no apparent injury had been done to their constitutions by the amount of poison they had consumed.

According to their account they had taken to the habit to protect them from infection, and to assist in their digestion. To the astonishment of the naturalists, these men swallowed before their eyes several grains of the poison, sufficient to have killed any two men who had not become accustomed to it.

The poison is bought by the peasants as rat poison; the foresters also have it, as arsenic facilitates the running of bullets and shot in globular form; and from these men it can be sometimes procured. The pedlars also dispose of it secretly. There is, however, a good deal of difficulty in obtaining regular supplies, and the traffic on it is kept secret.

In the conscience of the people, the indulgence in arsenic is regarded as sinful, and the clergy use their utmost influence to hold the habit in check. Doctors dissuade from it.

Lovers make inquiries, before they commit themselves, whether the girls of their choice are arsenic eaters, for even the most ardent lover will draw back if he thinks that the girl he desires to take to his heart and home keeps a supply of deadly poison always by her.

But priest and doctor, and public opinion and private conscience, are powerless to prevail on one who has acquired the habit to break it of it; for to give up arsenic means to wither and die.

It is said that wives gradually accustom their husbands to arsenic, the man being unconscious that he is given it; and the woman's object is to have her husband so completely in her power that, if he gives her occasion to be jealous or angry, she withholds the amount put daily with his food, and his collapse is certain. It is also said that on more than one occasion farmers or their wives have taught their servants to take arsenic, and then have held them in their power. The servants are afraid to leave, or ask for an increase of wage, least they should be denied their daily dose, and so prematurely decay.

Whether the cessation from taking arsenic is certainly fatal can hardly be said, as it is difficult to obtain statistics and accurate observations in these cases, but the prevailing conviction is that if the dose be intermitted the checks fall in, the hair loses its gloss, the eyes grow dull, and the health fails altogether. Death rapidly ensues unless the medicine be again promptly resorted to.

The arsenic eater is said to be known by the brightness, but somewhat metallic lustre, of the eye, by a nervous excitability and irritability, by transparency of complexion, and plumpness of the flesh. Even when advanced in age, the arsenic eater preserves an unusual freshness of appearance and absence of wrinkles.

Medicines have no effect on arsenic eaters and many an one addicted to this habit ends his days by an overdose taken purposely to relieve him of pains which the physician is unable to overcome.

The old fable is, after all, true in many cases, that the Evil One claims his tribute unexpectedly if once this Elixir of Youth be had recourse to; for among arsenic eaters it happens, as with the takers of chloral, that they exaggerate their powers of withstanding the poison, or on certain occasions think they require extraordinary doses, and these extraordinary doses of the beloved medicine kill them.

That the possession of the mineral may be a temptation to use it as a poison also, is unfortunately true; and it is precisely the fear of this that causes those who are suspected of arsenic eating to be regarded by the public of their own class with disapproval.

Grains of Gold.

Want of decision is want of interest.

Who speaks, sows; who listens, reaps.

Great difficulties bring out grave virtues.

One is contented with what he has done.

Folly ends where genuine hope begins.

The essence of true nobility is neglect of self.

Better part with your dignity that your safety.

One loses all the time he can employ better.

The sweetest fruit grows nearest the ground.

He that stands in the valley will never get over the hill.

From the lowest depth, there is a path to the loftiest height.

Indiscretion, rashness, falsehood, levity, and malice produce each other.

Any man may commit a mistake, but none but a fool will continue in it.

Speak with contempt of no man. Every one hath a tender sense of reputation.

Be not familiar with the idea of wrong, for sin in fancy mothers many an ugly fact.

What we call life is a journey to death, and what we call death is a passport to life.

In characters, in manners, in style, in all things, the supreme excellence is simplicity.

If we did not first take great pains to corrupt our nature, our nature would never corrupt us.

Whatever disgrace we have merited, it is almost always in our power to re-establish our reputation.

Imprudence, silly talk, foolish vanity, and vain curiosity, are closely allied; they are children of one family.

Femininities.

Let us try to cultivate a generous spirit in all things.

The Queen of Greece is a clever artist. She probably paints in oils.

You can sweep a rag carpet much cleaner sweeping crosswise of the width.

Three Michigan girls were fined five dollars for "cutting up" in church.

Fashionable mourning nowadays does not always last as long as the crape.

In making up the unbleached muslin allow one inch to the yard for shrinkage.

No woman should write herself "Mrs." or "Miss" at the end of her notes or letters.

If you fold your clothes as you take them from the line they will iron much easier.

The young girl who tells all domestic matters when she "goes out" should have a keeper.

For dressy afternoon, ball and evening toilets the stockings must match the gown in color.

Your copper wash boiler, if well rubbed with a cloth dipped in coal oil, will be clean and bright.

To keep your bedding pure and whole some open up your beds to air the first thing in the morning.

The newest earrings are a revival of the old Creole hoops of gold or silver, plain, chased, or set with jewels.

Some of the daintiest parasols of net and tulle are fringed all around with petals of roses, poppies, lilies or ferns.

The popular bracelet is a bangle, and the popular girl wears about 20 on the same arm, each presented her by some admirer.

A give away. She: "All extremely bright men are awfully conceited, anyway." He: "Oh, I don't know; I'm not."

A colored woman has been appointed Postmaster at Halifax, N. C. Her name is Davis, and her husband is a school teacher.

Lady lawyer: "I demand the discharge of my client, your honor." Counsel for plaintiff: "May I ask upon what grounds?" Lady lawyer: "Well—because."

An Indiana maiden, suing for breach of promise, has put in evidence not only the letters of the faithless one, but also her own, to show the depth of ruined affection.

"What's the matter?" the schoolmistress asked. "Back's sore, ma'am." "What made it sore?" "Pop pounded his thumb with the hatchet this morning, and I laughed."

Nature loves truth so well that it hardly ever admits of flourishing. Conceit is to nature what paint is to beauty; it is not only needless, but it impairs what it would improve.

A solitary young man is to graduate with 60 young ladies from the Buffalo Normal School, this month. In bravery he seems to us to stand only one rung lower than the father of his country.

Country and city. Miss Sheats: "Ah, look at that wheat rising and falling yonder on the breeze! How beautiful!" Mr. Weeplt: "Ah, but you ought to see it rising and falling in the Produce Exchange!"

"Bobby," cautioned his mother (they were guests at dinner), "is it possible you are eating with your knife?" "Yes, ma," responded Bobby, with a look of intense chagrin: "but I forgot I was visitin'."

At the Thames Police Court, London, recently, a woman who had been convicted 237 times at that and other courts in the metropolis, was charged with being drunk and disorderly. She got five days at hard labor.

Alarming. Lady Belle Gravis, in London: "At the last drawing-room the Queen kissed an American girl who was presented to her." Miss Allie Basane, of Chicago, dreaming for her presentation: "Horrors! She doesn't always, does she?"

There is a woman in Springfield, Mass., who is determined not to be cheated. She purchased a spool of cotton at a dry goods store the other day, and insisted on having the clerk rewind and measure it, to make sure it did not fall below 200 yards.

Flossie is 6 years old. "Mamma," she asked one day, "if I get married will I have to have a husband like pa?" "Yes," replied the mother, with an amused smile. "And if I don't get married will I have to be an old maid like Aunt Kate?" "Yes." "Mamma," after a pause, "it's a tough world for us women, ain't it?"

A Mrs. Coomes, who died at Pleasant Ridge, Ky., recently, was buried on the one hundredth anniversary of her birth, which occurred the day after her death. In her coffin were placed a hymn-book given to her by her great-grandfather when she was 6 years old, a silk neckerchief given her by her brother on her 7th birth-day anniversary, and her wedding-ring, which she had worn eighty years, and which was reduced to a thread of gold.

Some active women who pride themselves on their housekeeping seem to forget that the object of keeping house is that human beings may be accommodated in it. Their sole idea seems to be this, that the object of keeping a house is that the house may be kept in a certain form and order; and in studying the form and order they sacrifice the comfort the house was established to secure. Such active women are a source of trouble because they want sense to direct and control their energies.

The late Mary Crawford was sexton of St. Barnabas Chapel, New York, for nearly 20 years and died at the age of 84. Her position was no sinecure. She had to put on the chancel before and take off after every service the altar furnishings, lecterns, carpet and all the books for a service of 200 people. She cared for and kept clean the holy vessels and priestly vestments. She not only kept the missionary's room in order, but she prepared his lunch and tea, and helped him to distribute the books from the library and visited the sick.

Masculinities.

He fasts enough whose wife scolds at dinner-time.

He deserves not the sweet who will not taste of the sour.

When poverty comes in at the cottage door, true love goes at it with an ax.

An Illinois legislator called for a veal culvert the other day at a Springfield hotel.

It is no wonder that the wives of some "society men" prefer the society of a pet dog.

A great many men acquire $2 worth of pomposity and arrogance with a $1 public office.

The office should seek the man, but it should inspect him thoroughly before taking him.

Kaid McLean, a Scotchman, is commander-in-chief of the army of the Sultan of Morocco.

The man who cannot blush, and who has no feeling of fear, has reached the acme of impudence.

The newest English umbrellas have knobs with broad, flat tops, upon which designs are worked out in gold and silver and platinum.

The St. Andre coal-pit in Belgium is 3084 feet deep. This would be a good hiding-place for a man while his love-letters are being read in Court.

Despise not any man, and do not spurn anything. For there is no man that hath not his hour, nor is there anything that hath not its place.

In the course of a prayer a Scotch Presbyterian preacher recently said: "And bless the poor; and bless the rich who after their funerals will be poor."

It is said that on the inside of a ring owned in Atchison, Kan., is engraved the following: "T. and H., betrothed April, 1886; divorced May, 1888."

He, pathetically: "All great men have smoked, my dear." She, with animation: "Oh, if you will only leave off until you are great I shall be quite content."

A man in Missouri recently, by mistake, ran away with his own wife. She was disguised in a fancy ball-room costume, and he did not recognize her for some time.

D. Augustus Vanderveer, who owns a large vineyard at Manalapan, N. J., has put paper bags over 10,000 bunches of growing grapes as a protection against insects.

"You wish to marry one of my daughters. The youngest will get 15,000 marks, the second 30,000, and the oldest 45,000." "You don't happen to have one still older?"

"Reduce your gas bills 75 per cent.; secret for $1," read an advertisement which a Brooklyn man answered. He received this reply by return mail: "Burn kerosene."

Dr. Henry Gibbons, in a recent lecture at San Francisco, described a kiss as "the anatomical juxtaposition of two orbicularis oris muscles in a state of contraction." There!

A man in Georgia kept bees, and, not satisfied with their proverbial industry, actually attempted to cross them with lightning-bugs in order to secure a continuation of honey-making through the night.

It has been broadly circulated since the graduation of the Yale Art School that women received three of the four prizes; but the fact that the class had forty-one women and six men has not been as widely published.

Mr. Jonathan Trump: "You are charming to-night, Miss Penelope Peachblow: Indeed? What nice things you men say! Mr. Brown just told me the same thing. Mr. Jonathan Trump (anxious to depreciate his rival)—Of course you don't believe he meant it!

Base ball maiden: "Yes, Mr. Joblots, all is over between us. Here is the ring." Mr. Joblots: "I am to understand then, Mabel, that our engagement is at an end?" "Exactly. I give you your release and expect to sign a new man the latter part of the week. Good-bye."

There is a Total Abstinence Society, it appears, in France, as it displays near the wine shops pictures of the human stomach as burned by absinthe. The wine shops also have their cartoons exhibiting the hideous state of the stomachs of teetotalers—more dreadful in an artistic point of view.

A male beauty show is to be opened in Vienna, and the decisions are to be made by a jury of women. Four prizes will be awarded: One to the handsomest man, one to the owner of the finest moustache, the third to him who has the largest nose, and the fourth to the competitor having the least hair on his head.

To keep off mosquitoes take a small quantity of 2 per cent. karbolic acid solution and sprinkle sheets, coverlets, pillow and bolster slips on both sides, the edges of bed curtains and the wall next the bed. The face and neck may also be slightly wetted with the solution. Not a single gnat or mosquito will come near.

The frock coat for early mornings is succumbing to the cutaway. It is not so many years since only frock coats were worn. Now at many weddings cutaways have taken the place of the frock. One reason for this, and probably the chief reason, is that women think men look better in cutaway coats than in frock coats.

A swimming professor says in regard to sea bathers caught in the undertow, that the bather should keep cool, lie as flat on his back as possible, and wait for a wave. With the wave he should make a vigorous stroke for the shore, and then lie still and level again until another wave will help him. In this way he can cheat the sea of a victim.

One of the worst cases of revenge upon a mother-in-law is reported from Buenos Ayres. The young man had quarreled with the woman and left her. He then advertised in the papers that at the house where she was living "a domesticated crocodile" was for sale, and for days the poor old lady was besieged by hundreds of bidders for the curiosity.

Recent Book Issues.

Worthington Co., 747 Broadway, New York, have just published "Two Daughters of One Race," a new novel, by the gifted author W. Heimburg, whose former book, "Gertrude's Marriage," was so favorably received by the press and public. Two Daughters of One Race deals with certain peculiar phases of German high life society, and of the fortunes of two young and beautiful noble ladies. The marriage of one of the sisters to the younger son of a reigning prince, looked upon by his family as a mesalliance, produces discord, and when after the death of an elder brother during the Franco-German war the husband, for so-called state reasons tries to cancel the marriage, the story reaches its climax. Altogether the novel is delightfully told and very dramatic in its treatment. For sale by Lippincott & Co.

FRESH PERIODICALS.

Cassell's Family Magazine for July opens with a new serial called "Engaged to be Married," which most young ladies will consider an engaging title. "Going to the South Pole" is an account of an exploration in that direction, by E. J. Webb "Noblesse Oblige" is a bright story in three chapters, which is followed by words and music of a pretty song, "The Two Gates." There is a chapter on "The Working of the Telephone," and the Family Doctor follows with some valuable hints on digestion and biliousness. There are some timely hints on arranging flowers, and other interesting department is that giving the latest fashion news from London and Paris. Fiction, poetry, essay, and the "Gatherer" fill out an excellent number, which is prettily illustrated. Cassell & Co., publishers, New York.

The Quiver for July has for its opening article "Some of the Most Famous Spires." The designs that accompany it show what an important part the spire plays in cathedral architecture. "Miss Hilary's Suitors" is concluded, and the other serial, "Dorothy's Vocation," is continued. "A Lilliputian Community" describes the Chase Farm Schools at Enfield, England. There is an interesting paper on "The English Language" by Tryon Edwards, D. D., and a parable from the pen of Lady Laura Hampton, followed by a paper with the curious title of "Waiters for Sorrow." "La Marguerite" is a good story in seven chapters. There are other stories, poems and papers of a theological nature, but to American readers there are none that will prove more interesting than "A Peep at Dr. Phillips Brook's Church." Cassell & Company, publishers, New York.

PECULIARITIES.—A curious sight near Ellijay, Ga., is the grave of a mountaineer's wife which is protected from the fury of the elements by a number of lightning rods.

Atlanta has a black cat which in the evening follows people around emitting "mournful snarls." At midnight, according to a darky testimony, the cat climbs a fence post and turns into a beautiful woman, who vanishes with a "fearful yell."

The statistics of New England prove that seven out of every ten women left widows under the age of thirty five marry again within two years. They are probably obliged to or starve.

There is a fashion even in tombstones. White marble monuments are going out and but few headstones are now made for the fashionable dead in white marble. Granite in dark shades is the prevailing rage, and nearly all the new monuments are being made of that material.

The town of Eaton, Ohio, is aroused over the outline of a man's face which appears on the window glass of a house in which one Christman, who was murdered two years ago, lived. Christman's wife and daughter occupy the dwelling and they both say that they have seen the face since last March, and have avoided making it known to the public from the fact that they did not want to be bothered with the people coming to see it. It is stated that others have seen the face and it resembles very closely that of the murdered man.

No Laplander has ever written a song, and no Finlander has ever written a book. No wonder they are a happy people.

Out of the 50 people at a Cincinnati banquet 13 would not eat venison, 10 would not touch turkey, 18 would have nothing to do with salads, 15 refused coffee, 28 let cheese alone and not over 20 would eat cake.

The owner of a patent medicine, which is declared to be a remedy for nearly all the "ills that flesh is heir to," is a woman in Brooklyn, N. Y., who is such an invalid that she has not been out of her room for twenty-three years.

PAPER BUILDING MATERIAL.—Paper for building purposes has many advantages. It can be made in rolls of almost any width or length, and will stop the passage of air because there are no joints. It has no grain like wood and will not split. It is not effected by change of temperature, and, therefore, has the advantage over sheet metal as roofing material. It may be rendered waterproof by saturation with asphalt or other methods. It is non-resonant. It is a non-conductor of heat and can be made fire-resisting by chemical treatment. By being solidified it can replace wood for many purposes, and after proper preparation it is unaffected by heat, cold, or dampness.

IT is stated that the London firemen are to be dressed in clothing made of asbestos, which is thoroughly fire-proof.

His Mistake.

BY J. CAMELL.

HENRY DYSON was alone in his office.

He was a pleasant-looking man of about thirty-five or forty, and his fellow citizens frequently pointed to him with pride as a self-made business man.

But while everybody had a good word for Henry Dyson, very few people spoke well of his brother Tom.

On the night our story opens, the merchant was waiting for his graceless brother, and as the hours rolled on the frown on his face grew deeper.

"I can do nothing with Tom," he said, as he paced the floor impatiently. "I have given him every possible chance, but he grows more idle and dissipated every day. Perhaps I ought not wait for him, but he was so urgent in his request for an interview to-night that I could not refuse. Poor fellow! What new trouble can he be mixed up in?"

The front door opened, and a young man entered quietly, and, after a furtive glance round, proceeded to the office.

"Well," said Henry Dyson.

"I am here, you see," replied Tom.

"I suppose," said Henry, "that it is useless to ask why you are so late, or where you have been during the past two days."

Tom looked a little nervous, and his eyes fell.

"That is neither here nor there," he answered, in a swaggering way. "I have had some business of my own to look after, and I knew that you were not short of help here."

"Well, what is it?" asked Henry abruptly.

"Henry," Tom broke out hurriedly and in a faltering voice, "I must have some money: a hundred dollars or so."

"I wonder where you will get it," Henry rejoined. "You will not get an another penny from me—that's certain. Why should I toil here and economize in order to furnish you with funds to be lost at the gaming table?"

"If I do not get this money," said Tom, turning very pale, "I shall have to leave the country."

"A good thing for the country, then," snapped Henry. "Don't let me interfere with your travelling plans."

Tom seemed to fall into pieces at this reply. He made one more effort."

"I hope you are not hard up yourself," he said.

"I was never getting on better," responded the merchant. "But that has nothing to do with the case."

He pulled open the door of the iron safe, and pointed to a little tin box.

"Do you see that?" he asked. "Well, that box contains $20,000 in notes. I drew the money from the bank to-day for an investment. No, Tom, I am prospering, but I am tired of your endless drain upon my purse. It must stop, and now is the time."

Henry rose from his chair and went into a little closet for his overcoat.

In an instant, before a man could count three seconds, Tom had drawn the flat tin box from the safe, and slipped it into the breast of his heavy overcoat.

His brother slowly emerged from the closet and put on his wrappings. Then he closed the door of the safe with a click.

"I am ready to go," he said. "You have no further business with me, I presume?"

"No!" Tom responded, with a pale, determined face. "Neither now nor later; good-bye!"

Tom walked out of the office without saying another word, banging the door after him.

"I know him," soliloquized the merchant. "He will not leave here. He will be here to-morrow with a new proposition. Perhaps, after all, I had better look into his affairs, and give him another chance."

He walked slowly out of the building, and locked the door. A glance up and down the street showed him that Tom was not in sight, and he then quietly made his way to his home, where he straightway went to bed.

After leaving his brother, Tom hugged the tin box to his breast, and walked at a rapid pace.

"It was an awful thing to do," he muttered; "but I had to have money, and I worked to make some of it."

The young man sped onward through the almost deserted streets until he reached the river.

Suddenly he pulled up with a jerk. He took the tin box from under his coat.

"No, I won't!" he exclaimed. "I must have been mad. I am no thief, and I will do anything before I will become one. There is but one thing to do. I will take the box back to my brother, confess my folly and then leave him."

He turned and retraced his steps. When he reached the bridge he paused a moment and looked over into the dark waters below.

"I may find peace there," he said, gloomily.

He leaned over the railing and listened to the swift-rolling current.

"Great powers!" he cried; "the box! the box!"

It had slipped through his fingers, and already the outflowing water was carrying it to the sea!

Tom ran in the direction of his brother's house, and then wheeled about and ran back to the bridge. His first impulse was to throw himself into the river.

"I am a fool," he said. "Suicide will not restore the money. I must now be a man if there is any manhood in me."

Across the river and into the thick darkness of the night, the guilty fugitive fled. Mile after mile he walked like a madman.

The lights of the city disappeared from view, and Tom found himself wandering in an unfamiliar locality.

Again the river came in sight and the wretched man decided to follow its course. It was not far to the sea. He would go on to the nearest port and ship as a sailor. Anything to get beyond his brother's reach and the eyes of those who knew him.

Thus the light of day found him, but it was not likely that any one along the river side would recognize him. There were very few dwellings, and the people he met were not disposed to be unpleasantly inquisitive.

So the half-crazed man rushed on through the day, till at nightfall he limped wearily into a small seaport town.

Henry Dyson made every effort to find his missing brother.

When he thought of the pained look in Tom's eyes on the night the poor fellow left, he reproached himself for allowing him to go away without a kind word of encouragement.

The detectives took the matter up, and the newspapers published an account of Tom's mysterious disappearance.

But it was all of no avail. There was no trace—no clue; and after a year or two the merchant came to the conclusion that his brother was a dead man.

Henry Dyson continued to prosper. He married happily, and, in the course of time little children came to make his home still brighter.

Twenty years had rolled away, when one night the merchant found himself alone in his office, writing a letter.

As he leaned back in his chair to take a moment's rest, he thought of the night a score of years before when Tom had visited him there to make a last appeal. Tears came into the rich man's eyes.

"He was my only brother," he sobbed, "and I acted like a brute. How easy it would have been for me to have paid his little debts. Then I could have watched over him, and in time my love would have touched his heart, and he would have turned out all right. But it is too late now to think of these things."

The door opened with hardly a creak and the merchant would not have known it but for the rush of cool air.

He rose from his chair just in time to greet a visitor who walked into the office without even a knock on the door to herald his approach.

Henry Dyson looked upon him in speechless astonishment. If he could trust his eyes this was Tom Dyson, but not the Tom of twenty years before. It was an old man with wrinkled face and white hair.

"Henry," said the visitor, holding out his hand, "are you glad to see me?"

With a joyous exclamation the other caught him in his embrace, and then seated him in a chair.

"This is a glad hour for me, Tom," he said; "I had given you up for dead, and I have all these years been reproaching myself for my harshness to you that night, you know."

"Hold on," cried the other, excitedly. "You must not overwhelm me with kindness until I have made restitution. Here in this package you will find the money to replace the sum I took from the safe in the little tin box. It has taken me these twenty years to make it, but here it is at last."

"But I do not understand," interrupted Henry.

"Oh, but you must," replied his brother. "When you turned away to get your coat that night I slipped the box out of the safe and concealed it. Then you locked the safe, unconscious of your loss, and I left you."

"But the box was empty!" shouted Henry.

"Impossible," answered Tom, "for you told me that it contained twenty thousand dollars. Well, I rushed off with the box, but repented, and was on my way to return it when I carelessly let it slip into the water when I crossed the bridge. Now you know why I ran away and concealed myself. I had but one object—to make enough money to pay you back, and then I would ask your forgiveness."

"Oh, what a foolish Tom!" said Henry. "Way, man, I found in the morning that my book-keeper, when he found that I was not going to use it till the next day, had taken the money from the box and carried it back to the bank that afternoon. I missed the empty box, but I never connected that with your disappearance."

"Then this money——"

"Is yours," said Henry. "But even if you had lost my money, as you supposed, you should have come back to me. I sometimes talked roughly to you, but you ought to have known how I loved you, Tom."

The two white-haired men sat there till midnight, talking about old times and making plans for the future.

"You must live with me, Tom," said Henry, as he took him home. "I can't trust you ought of my sight again."

And Tom gave his promise, at the same time thanking Heaven for blessing him with such a big-hearted brother.

These two knew no misunderstanding and no parting until death came to separate them, and in all the city no man was more respected and beloved than Tom Dyson.

His big mistake made a man of him.

NEVER press a favor when it seems undesired.

A HORSE'S BROKEN HEART.—The emotional life of the horse is remarkable. There are instances on record where the death of the horse has been traced directly to grief. One instance is called to mind which occurred more than twenty years ago.

A circus had been performing in the little town of Unionville, Pa., when one of the trained horses sprained one of his legs so that he could not travel. He was taken to the hotel and put in a box stall.

The leg was bandaged and he was made as comfortable as possible. He ate his food and was apparently contented till about midnight, when the circus began moving out of town.

Then he became restless and tramped and whined. As the caravan moved past the hotel he seemed to realize that he was being deserted, and his anxiety and distress became pitiful.

He would stand with his ears pricked in an attitude of intense listening, and then as his ears caught the sounds of the retiring wagons he would rush, as best as he could with his injured leg, from one side of the stall to the other, pushing at the door with his nose, and making every effort to escape.

The stableman, who was a stranger to him, tried to soothe him, but to no purpose. He would not be comforted. Long after all sounds of the circus had ceased his agitation continued. The sweat poured from him in streams and he quivered in every part of his body.

Finally the stableman went to the house, woke up the proprietor and told him he believed the horse would die if some of the circus horses were not brought back to keep him company.

At about daylight the proprietor mounted a horse and rode after the circus. He overtook it ten or twelve miles away, and the groom who had charge of the injured horse returned with him. When they reached the stable the horse was already dead.

The stableman said that he remained for nearly an hour perfectly still, and with every sense apparently strained to the utmost tension, and then, without making a sign, fell and died with scarcely a struggle.

A 'GATOR'S QUEER APPETITE.—It is the custom of alligators to move across the country from one river to another. The purpose of this migration is not learned. They go alone and not in couples or droves as has sometimes been reported.

A short time ago a monster alligator started from the Hillsboro River to a lake back of Tampa, Fla.

He passed through the central part of the town and finally reached the back yard of T. A. Wilson. The reptile found himself in a flock of chickens and began at once to make a meal of them.

This raised such a commotion in the poultry yard that Mr. Wilson's attention was called to it and he went out to investigate. He discovered the saurian, and with a well directed shot hit him in the eye and killed him.

The big saurian was then cut open and skinned. In his back, which is more like a piece of white leather than anything else, except an alligator's back, were found a large number of bullets, which had passed through the scales and imbedded themselves in the backbone, where they had become flattened out and evidently caused the reptile no uneasiness.

When opened, the stomach of the alligator was a curiosity. A number of pieces of tin showed that he had enjoyed a tin can lunch, while from the fact that he had swallowed a beer bottle, it appeared that he was no prohibitionist. There were two small fish, nearly whole, and a pair of baby shoes.

It was not known whether he had swallowed a child, or whether he had found the shoes where the child had placed them and made a meal off of them, but every mother who saw the tiny shoes shuddered and clasped her own child tightly to her.

It will probably never be known how the shoes came there, but it may be that some mother's heart is sad over the loss of the little one who wore the tiny shoes.

The alligator was skinned and the skin sent to the tannery. The reptile measured 9 feet and 7 inches in length.

DOWN ON KISSING.—The kissing habit, says a certain paper, has been carried to its greatest extreme among English-speaking people, and people of other blood are often amazed and amused by the universality and cheapness of the kiss among the English nations.

It is not necessarily an argument in its favor, however, that it is thus found to be an accompaniment of the highest civilization, for it may be promptly resorted that vice and crime also increase with civilization, and that even civilized and refined peoples often keep alive barbarous practices inherited from savage ancestry.

The kiss, in its proper functions, has a fine significance, and may be made the vehicle of the purest emotions, the honest expression of legitimate feeling, a greeting full of genuine, voluntary sympathy and love.

The kissing habit is an abuse and a misuse. It has brought the kiss into disgrace and made it vulgar, cheap and hypocritical. Be it the province of this generation of refinement and education to rescue it from its degraded estate and restore it to its natural elevated and elevating place and use in the social economy.

A FOREIGN magazine of fashion, in describing a new dress, adds, "with this costume the mouth is to be worn slightly open."

Humorous.

THE MODERN MAID.

I.

"Where are you going to, my pretty maid?"
"I'm going to cooking school, sir," she said.

II.

"And what do you do there, my pretty maid?"
"Make waffles and biscuits, kind sir," she said.

III.

"And then do you eat them, my pretty maid?"
"From that, pray, excuse us, sir," she said.

—U. N. Nons.

A grass widow is not infrequently one whose children have a poor sort of fodder.

Plenty of sleep is conducive to beauty. Even a garment looks worn when it loses its nap.

Lady customer: "Do you keep linen writing-paper?" Stationer: "Yes, ma'am." "Will it wash?"

A sensitive soul. "Waiter, a beefsteak, but not a small one; I am so terribly nervous that every little thing upsets me."

Detective: "Was your cashier right or left-handed?" Bank president: "Right, I should say; nothing he could get his hands on is left."

Smith: "Jones is a magnificently developed man, isn't he? Do you know his bust measure?" Robinson: "No; but I think it is about ten bottles."

Convalescent: "Doctor, how much do I owe you for saving my life?" Doctor: "Sixty dollars." Convalescent: "Sixty dollars! It ain't worth it."

Johnny: "Dear papa, I love you so much." Papa: "I love you, too, Johnny, when you are good." "But, papa, I love you even when you ain't good."

The cat, on the outside of the milk can: "You seem to be enjoying yourself in there." The fish: "Yes, after a fashion; but what makes the water this whitish color?"

Young man: "You are older than I am, and I want to ask you a question. Does a woman always mean what she says?" Old man: "Always—that is, if she's married."

Pryer: "Speaking of lineage, Dooley, how far back can you trace your descent?" Dooley, absent-mindedly: "As far back as the door sill of her father's front stoop."

Postage stamp, to mail bag: "Bump into me again and I'll knock the stuffing out of you." Mail bag: "Try it, and you'll get the worst licking you ever had, you stuck-up thing!"

When a girl holds her breath a moment and then says sweetly, "Oh, no, smoking is not at all disagreeable to me, Mr. Price," you may be sure Mr. Price is not at all disagreeable to her, whether smoking is or not.

Henry: "Yes, Carrie, I love you with all my heart." Carrie: "It seems strange, Henry, that you should think so much of me." Henry: "I don't know about that. There's no accounting for tastes, you know."

Eccentric old club man, to a new footman: "Now then, Patrick, call me a cab." Pat, who thinks this is a dodge to try his sincerity: "Och, no, yer honor! It's not meself that'll be calling you any name, at all!"

Lieutenant: "Don't you know enough to salute your superior officer?" New sentry: "I did, sir." Lieutenant: "I failed to see you." New sentry: "Just as you came along I said, 'Ah, there!' but I guess you didn't hear me."

Angry wife, after a quarrel: "Seems to me we've been married about a hundred years. I can't even remember when or where we first met." Husband, emphatically: "I can. It was at a dinner party, and there were 13 at the table."

Mistress, to butler: "Well, John, I hear you have come into quite a little legacy. I suppose you will be thinking of getting a wife now." John: "Lor' bless yer, mum, not if I knows it! I've seen too much of married life with missuses, beggin' yer pardin, mum."

Mrs. Jersey Hyles: "Of course you are having a delightful wedding journey, dear?" Mrs. de Boeuf, of Chicago: "It was pretty solemn until we reached Buffalo. We brought Mr. de Boeuf's first wife's remains as far as there; but the rest of the trip was delightful, thank you."

The little boy was on his knees in his little night dress saying his prayers, and his little sister couldn't resist the temptation to tickle the soles of his little feet. He stood it as long as he could, and then he said: "Please, God, excuse me while I knock the stuffing out of Nellie."

Proud father, showing off precocious child before visitors: "Whose 'ittle boy is oo?" Precocious child: "Mean, stingy ole t'ings 'ittle boy." Proud father, in astonishment: "Why, no, Archie, 'oo papa's 'ittle boy." Precocious child, positively: "Well, 'at's wot mammy calls papa, anyhow."

Hotel clerk, suspiciously: "Your bundle has come apart. May I ask what that queer thing is?" Guest: "This is a new patent fire escape. I always carry it, so in case of fire I can let myself down from the hotel window, see?" Clerk, thoughtfully: "I see. Our terms for guests with fire escapes, sir, are invariably cash in advance."

SHOWERS OF FROGS AND BLOOD.—Showers of frogs, such as fell in Dakota the other day, are by no means uncommon occurrences. They frequently happen in Italy, but it is noticed that the phenomenon always takes place near a wall, and there is a grave suspicion that the little hoppers are merely washed from the roofs and gutters during a heavy rain.

The rain of blood that frightened The Hague out of its senses in the seventeenth century was caused by an enormous swarm of tiny red water fleas. Other sanguinary showers have had an equally harmless origin, and most of them have certainly been caused by rain falling through very fine red dust from desert regions, which is sometimes carried through the air for hundreds of miles.

The peasantry of Andalusia in 1804 witnessed a shower of wheat, and were disposed to think the good old days of the children of Israel had returned when provisions were providentially supplied. The explanation was very simple when it was found out.

CONSUMPTION in the German army is greatly dreaded by the authorities, since the recent Parisian Medical Congress pronounced that the disease was contagious. Accordingly the German War Minister has decided that the chest of every soldier must be measured once a month. If the chest does not reach a certain breadth, and does not develop with drill and athletic exercises, the soldier will be disqualified as predisposed to consumption and likely to infect his comrades.

"You look tired, Miss Brown; too much dancing?" "Oh, dear me, no! but we gave what is called an 'engaged dinner' last week, where eight betrothed couples were invited, and afterward they retired to eight different corners of the two rooms and whispered all the evening, and it reminded pape and mamma so much of their courtship they went out and sat on the stairs and left me alone. Do you wonder I still look tired?"

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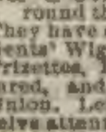

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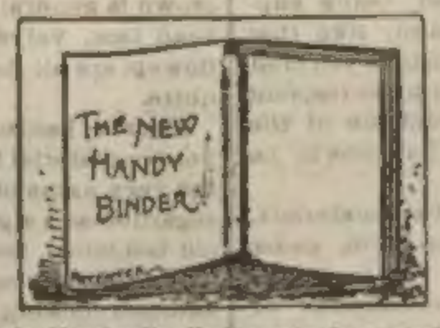

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Anyone knowing a tune, either "in the head," as it is called, or able to hum, whistle or sing, can play it WITHOUT ANY PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF MUSIC OR THE INSTRUMENTS. In fact it may be the first time they have ever seen a piano or organ, yet if they know so much as to whistle or hum a tune—say "Way Down on the Swanee River," for instance—they can play it IMMEDIATELY, correctly and with good effect, on the piano or organ, with the assistance of this GUIDE. THE GUIDE shows how the tunes are to be played with both hands and in different keys. Thus the player has the full effect of the bass and treble clefs, together with the power of making correct and harmonious chords in accompaniments. It must be plainly understood that the Guide will not make an accomplished musician without study. It will do nothing of the kind. What it can do, do well and WITHOUT FAIL is to enable anyone understanding the nature of a tune or air in music to play such tunes or airs, without ever having opened a music book, and without previously needing to know the difference between A or G, a half-note or a quarter-note, a sharp or a flat. The Guide is placed on the instrument, and the player, without reference to anything but what he is shown by it to do, can in a few moments play the piece accurately and without the least trouble. Although it does not and never can supplant regular books of study, it will be of incalculable assistance to the player by "ear" and all others who are their own instructors. By giving the student the power to play IMMEDIATELY twelve tunes of different character—this number of pieces being sent with each Guide—the ear grows accustomed to the sounds, and the fingers used to the position and touch of the keys. So, after a very little practice with the Guide, it will be easy to pick out, almost with the skill and rapidity of the trained player, any air or tune that may be heard or known.

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Latest Fashion Phases.

The most curious and remarkable point about the new fashions for the season is the absence of intermediate sizes in chapeaux and manties, they are both either very large or extremely small; in chapeaux this peculiarity is very noticeable, for the capotes, especially those in toque shape, barely cover the top of the head, while the fashionable hats not only cover the head well, but overshadow the face and sides of the head with their wide brims.

In spite of this apparent want of reasonableness in shape, the new models are as becoming as they are pretty, and for the few whom they do not suit there are many styles of capotes with diadem brims, or open Directoire bonnets, which are stylish and ladylike.

Flat shapes, with the lace or other covering arranged from the lower part of the back towards the front, where it generally rises a little above the head, are most general, and the favorite color for trimming is green, both flowers and leaves being made in the tenderest and most delicate shades of this color.

Pale green velvet roses in several shades veiled by black tulle, are a very favorite ornament for capotes.

The strings are of narrow ribbon, and come quite from the back; they are either tied under the chin, or allowed to float over the shoulders, this is, however, a juvenile mode, only adopted by youthful wearers.

Many of these flat chapeaux are comfortable and sit well on the head, being supplied with a straight, stiff band, like that of a Tam-o'-Shanter cap, which is covered with ribbon and ornamented to correspond with the trimming on the outside of the chapeau wherever the band happens to be visible.

Toque capotes are made of all materials, the lightest models being in tulle, gauze and crepe.

The trimming, never voluminous or high, is placed in front; a flat Alsatian bow of handsome ribbon, or of brocaded gauze, and a very small bunch of flowers, is the favorite style of trimming.

Some of the new wide-brimmed hats have the brim turned up in front and lined with white lace or embroidered crepe; the hat itself is of light-colored silk, or even tulle.

Flowers are the usual trimming for tulle bonnets and hats, but for straw hats, plumes of feather tips still remain in vogue. Bands of fine colored straw are sometimes placed on the outer edge of the brims of black straw hats, and the second color is also introduced in other ways.

Black straw hats, with a band of green straw bordering the brim, and trimming of black lace and feathers, or sprays of green foliage are practical and ladylike chapeaux for spring and early summer wear.

Small manties are very much made in the shape of tight-fitting jackets, with pelerines reaching half-way to the elbow only, and lace collars, plastrons and mantelet ends.

The sleeves in some models are in the ordinary coat shape, in others they are in the looser bell shape; but pelerine sleeves, formed of lace and silk, with bows on the shoulders, are fashionable with jackets made without pelerines.

In mantelets there are many pretty models with rounded pelerine sleeves, open in front, so that they simply fall over the arm, and with long full ends of lace drawn in at the waist by ribbon bands and bows. Of absolute novelty there is not much, but there are many elegant and new details in trimming and variations in shape that are quite as effective, and give the necessary appearance of novelty.

The long manties are handsomer and more varied in style; they are rich combinations of lace and silk, with costly beaded passementerie ornaments; and for summer wear there are some charming new models of long circular cloaks in black lace, mounted on yokes of jetted passementerie made in various shapes, and often with long points reaching to the waist.

As to tailor-made jackets, there is infinite variety in the manner in which the fronts are made; but the tight fitting back is common to all.

As a rule, the fronts are made without breast-pleats, and are ornamented with embroidery appliques, brandenburghs and gold or silver passementerie.

For summer toilettes, the crossed bodice from the shoulders, over a full chemisette of surah or crepe, will be very fashionable.

A dress of pongee silk in a delicate shade of old rose is made in this way. The pointed tunic and draped panel are made up on a full skirt, which may be of lace or of pongee silk, the chemisette is of white pongee silk, the crossed sash and ribbons tying in the full sleeves are of black velvet.

Another dress is a charming model of an indoor or walking costume; it is in silver-gray silk armure, one of the most fashionable materials in vogue, and consists of a redingote skirt, pleated and open in front over a tablier very richly embroidered in the Empire style.

The plastron, collar and parements are ornamented in the same way, and the corsage is laced together at the point of the plastron, the laces falling on the skirt.

A pretty costume is an indoor dress in pale green soft woollen material. The plastron and tunic are cut in one and draped over a pleated skirt.

The corsage is formed of a very small Figaro jacket of black passementerie, with the pleated fronts of a straight open jacket falling from it. The collar and sleeves are trimmed with black passementerie to correspond.

Low hats, which have so long been prophesied, have at last become a reality. So during the summer we shall see besides the little bonnet and the English toque, which in consequence of the hair being worn lower comes down deeper on the neck, the quite flat, low hat tied on with narrow strings.

These hats are a much greater protection to the face than their pretentious high-crowned predecessors, and are very light, as, though though the brim is straw, the crown is generally made of tulle. A little head lace, velvet strings and a tuft of flowers are all the trimming these hats require.

After a banishment of nearly twenty years a material has this season reappeared, the very name of which was until recently regarded as a sign of common-place or very old-fashioned taste.

We refer to barege, that bright, really summer-looking material, which has all of a sudden found its way among us again.

It is both plain and with interwoven border stripes and as such now regarded as quite a novelty.

The tight-fitting half-long jacket represents rather the future than the present fashion—that is, provided it finds favor in the eyes of leaders of society.

The cloth of these jackets of the future is apple-green, braid trimming in the same color. The cuffs and basque show the cut of Louis XV. The large collar is loose from the jacket, and either with or without it the revers and waistcoat are sufficient trimming.

Parasols are plain at present, but very elegant models, composed entirely of long feathers, or covered with fine soft marabout trimming, in white or pale colors, are prophesied for later on in the season.

In old times garnet ornaments were highly valued; of late they have fallen into desuetude. And now a set of garnet jewelry is considered very fashionable. A great improvement in cutting and setting them may be one of the reasons of this change.

There are two of these stones, the round, oriental garnet. Both have the same beautiful deep red color, which shines lighter or darker, according to the size of the stone. The unpolished gem also displays different degrees of transparency. The a jour setting is the most liked.

Every ornament usually made in other stones is now to be seen made in garnets—brooches, pins, bracelets, combs, ear-rings (including the new Creole ear-rings), necklaces, rings, etc.

Odds and Ends.

ON VARIOUS KITCHEN MATTERS.

Caper Grill.—The legs and breast of a roast chicken. Score these deeply; prepare the following sauce: One teaspoonful of fresh mustard, one teaspoonful of chopped capers, two small teaspoonfuls of salad oil; mix well together. Fill the scores on the meat, and rub a little of the mixture over the legs and breast. Heat thoroughly in the oven, or grill before a quick fire.

Anchovy Grill.—Chicken as above. One teaspoonful of butter, one small teaspoonful of anchovy paste, one of chopped parsley, as much cayenne pepper as will cover a five cent piece; mix well, and rub in and over the meat. Cook as above.

Savory Fish.—Line a small pudding dish with puff paste, lay in a layer of cold curried shrimps or prawns, a layer of cold shredded scraps of fish—turbot, sole, fresh haddock, brill, or plaice—another layer of curried shrimps, then fish scraps, then curried shrimps or prawns, and so on till the pie-dish is full. Pour over it enough white stock, salted and peppered to prevent its becoming too dry in cooking, cover in with puff paste, and bake in a quick oven.

Savory Fish.—Pull in small pieces the remains of any white fish, add bacon in the proportions of one part of bacon to three of fish, a little chopped onions and parsley, pepper and salt. Fill the pie dish nearly full, and moisten with a little fish or veal stock. Have ready one or two good-sized floury potatoes. Mash with milk, a little butter and one egg. Chop very fine one teaspoonful of capers, three olives, one red chilli, one gherkin. Mix well into the potatoes, and make a crust about an inch thick over the fish. Bake in a moderate oven.

Riz a l'Imperatrice.—Boil three tablespoonfuls of rice (picked and washed clean) in a pint of milk, with sugar to taste, and a piece of vanilla. When done put it into a basin to get cold. Make a custard with a gill of milk and the yolks of four eggs; when cold mix it with the rice. Beat up to a froth a gill of cream with some sugar and a pinch of isinglass dissolved in a little water; mix this very lightly with the rice and the custard, fill a mould with the mixture and set it on ice. When moderately iced, turn it out and serve.

Icing for Cakes.—Put one or more whites of egg into a basin, with a little lemon juice and some "glace" sugar; well work the mixture with a wooden spoon, and as it gets thin keep on adding more sugar until you get a smooth paste of the consistency of butter.

Beat up ½lb. of icing sugar with the whites of one and a half eggs till stiff and smooth; add a little orange-flower water. While the cake is still warm spread the icing over it evenly with a palette knife. Ornament with candied fruit, and put it in a moderate oven to harden, but not to color.

Coffee Icing.—Take one-half pound of fresh butter and one one-quarter pound of powdered sugar, and beat them to a cream in a bowl, adding drop by drop during the process half a teacupful of the strongest coffee that can be made.

Chocolate Icing.—Put into a saucepan one-half pound of powdered loaf sugar, 2oz. of grated chocolate, and about a gill of water; stir on the fire until the mixture assumes the consistency of a thick, smooth cream. Lay the icing evenly on the cake or pastry with a palette knife, and put it into the oven for a minute or two to set the icing.

Tomato Salad.—Peel some good-sized tomatoes, not over-ripe; cut them in slices, and remove the pips; lay them in a dish (previously rubbed with garlic) with oil and vinegar, in the proportion of two to one; sprinkle pepper and salt over them according to taste, and a few leaves of basil minced fine. They should be in the sauce a couple of hours before serving.

French Beans Salad—String some French beans, and boil them whole in plenty of salted water. When cold dress them with oil, vinegar, pepper, salt, some tarragon and capers finely minced, and garnish with hard boiled eggs, anchovies and beet-root. The dish must be well rubbed with a shallot.

Green Pea Salad.—Put some cold boiled peas (marrowfats are the best) into a dish previously rubbed with a shallot, and pour over them a mayonnaise sauce of plain salad dressing, and garnish with small heads of green mint.

Clear Game Soup.—Cut up into convenient pieces either a calf's foot or a cow's heel. Pack them into a saucepan with the remnants of two or three birds (grouse, partridges, woodcocks, &c.), a small piece of ham, an onion, two carrots, a piece of celery, some parsley, a bay leaf, a sprig of thyme, whole pepper, cloves, mace, and salt to taste. Fill up with cold water, and let the whole simmer for three hours; then strain the liquor and set it to boil again. When boiling throw in an ounce of raw beef or liver coarsely chopped, a wineglassful of sherry, and after a couple of minutes strain the liquor through a napkin and serve.

Potage a la Cussy.—Cut in very thin slices a dozen or more small white onions, such as are used for pickling, put them into a saucepan with a couple of ounces of fresh butter and a tablespoonful of powdered lump sugar. Toss lightly on the fire until the onions are of a golden color; then add a little more than a pint of hot water. When it boils throw in a wineglass of pale brandy, and pepper and salt to taste; then pour into the soup tureen over some very small dice of bread previously fried in butter. Grated Parmesan cheese to be served with or in this soup.

Confidential Correspondents.

W. H. D.—Weak oil of vitriol; turns black when heated.

READER.—Giving carte blanche to any one signifies that he has in any matter he may be engaged in authority to act as he pleases.

NOVICE.—The gentleman should be introduced to the lady with some such informal speech as this: "Miss——allow me to present Mr. ——."

NELSON.—A bill authorizing the payment of a premium for scalps of foxes, wolves, wildcats, weasels and skunks killed in this State, was passed by the late Legislature and was also signed by the Governor.

TIP.—For deafness, the result of scarlet fever, which has lasted over a period of forty years, we fear there will be no cure. But you had better consult some physician who makes diseases of the ear his especial study.

DUNDEE.—Black spirit varnish may be made as follows: Powder half an ounce of black sealing-wax and put it into a phial with two ounces of rectified spirits of wine; place them near the fire until the wax is dissolved. Use when warm, and lay the varnish on the work with a fine soft hair brush before a fire or in the sun.

W. A. S.—We have never heard any reason given for choosing the 30th of May as Decoration Day. May is proverbially "the month of flowers," which are used so profusely in Decoration Day ceremonies, and among other kindred reasons May was perhaps chosen because then almost all the commoner and fairer flowers are in bloom.

WINNIE.—After an acquaintance of eighteen months and all your lover's professions, there certainly ought to be a settled understanding between you. Have you no one to look after you? Some one should ask the young man what his intentions are, as it would be rather a delicate matter to attempt yourself. Such an unsettled state of affairs should not be allowed to go on any longer.

DOLLY V.—Dolly Varden is a creation of Dickens, the novelist. The character occurs in his novel of Barnaby Rudge. She is the daughter of a locksmith, and figures in some of the most amusing scenes in the book. The author represented the locksmith's daughter in a style of dress in vogue at the period of the story. It is this style of dress, or something like it, which is referred to, hence the name.

DIFFERENCE.—Murder in cold blood, refers to the case of premeditated murder, in which the crime has not the excuse of sudden passion, or hot blood arising from a quarrel. In reply to your second question we can only say that the day begins when the sun rises, an hour which changes every day. As to where it begins, we don't know that its beginning has any special locality, unless it may be said to begin in the East.

J. KING.—The Italian word fiasco means literally a flask. How it came to denote failure is not known for certain; but the following is probably the correct explanation: It is said that the glass blowers of Murano, trying to make some piece of ornamental glass work, failed in the attempt; the result of their labor being merely a fiasco, or common flask. Hence the word came to be used to express the failure or collapse of any undertaking.

AH SIN.—Chop sticks are small round sticks, of no prescribed shape or size, composed of a variety of materials, as wood, ivory, porcupine quills, etc. They are a very imperfect instrument for table use, but the Chinese, by dint of practice, are very skilful in their employment. They will lean over the plate until their lips are near the food, and shovel the rice (of which their meals principally consist) rapidly into their mouths, by a quick and incessant motion of these sticks.

VASE.—"Majolica" was the name at first given by the Italians to a certain kind of earthenware because the first specimens that they saw came from Majorca. But, as subsequently a large manufacture of the same kind of earthenware was carried on at Faenza, the name "majolica" was dropped and "faience" substituted. The term "majolica" is now used to designate vessels made of colored clay and coated with white opaque varnish so as to resemble "faience;" but it is of much less value than the latter.

ASSOCIATION.—A charter is a constitution granted by a higher power, such as the charter of a corporation granted by the State. A charter member is one of the original members. When an officer resigns he cannot alter the fact that he was one of those to whom the charter was granted, and, therefore, cannot properly have his name stricken from the list of the original members. As the charter is granted by a higher authority the association cannot change it unless the power to change it is expressly given it.

L. H. W.—The original meaning of Fenian is "man" or "a hunting man," from the Gaelic Fiann. Before the Indo Germanic invasion a Celtic race occupied parts of Ireland and Scotland, and also the north of Germany. They are referred to by Ossian. The Fenians of Ireland, Scotland, England and Scandinavia, had a great battle at Gabhra, Ireland, and extirpated each other, Oision only escaping. The name was adopted by the modern Irish insurgents as one significant of the former independence of their race.

FORECAST.—There are many forms of instrument used in measuring the velocity of the winds. Most of them are based upon the compression of a spiral spring, or of a series of springs by the force of the wind. Others employ a bag of air which is similarly compressed. Still others depend on the evaporation of water, which is more rapid the more speedy the winds. As for your second question we doubt that fire does burn better by night than by day, and therefore cannot attempt to explain an unproved assertion.

DECORATION.—The Homestead Law requires that the settler shall, after selecting his 160 acres, make entry in the land office of the district of his intention to occupy the same. This entry can only be made in reference to land which has been surveyed and to which there is no prior claim. But the government survey has already passed over the more desirable portions of the territories. The law further requires that the claimant shall build upon, cultivate, and make the pre-empted tract his actual homestead. Proof of such actual settlement and improvement for five years is all that is necessary to become a full owner of the farm.